

The role of journalism in polarization – An analysis of Finnish Broadcasting Company Yleisradio's reporting concerning issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate between 2015–2016.

Master's Thesis

Nadja Mikkonen 97313

Degree programme of Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research

University of Tampere

The Tampere Peace Research Institute

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## Abstract

This thesis uses tools from media framing theories as well as critical discourse analysis to find what has been the role of Finnish journalism in polarization of opinion. The findings have been mapped against the theories of polarization and conflict escalation to give the role of journalism in polarization a wider context in relation to peace and conflict studies. The background of this thesis is the apparent opinion division in Finland between 2015–2016 regarding topics related to multiculturalism and the then topical asylum seekers crisis. Some of the public discussion became heated during this time span, as several events reflecting the variety of opinions related to the topics sparked up. The events included political outputs, emergence of street patrols as well as mass demonstrations and reactions from the media. As data, this thesis uses several articles by the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle divided into events, and one television broadcast. The findings show that Yle has certain repetitive frames as well as journalistic routines that can be interpreted to have an impact in polarization. Simultaneously, this thesis found that Yle's role in polarization overall appears subtle, and mainly resorts to amplifying existing polarization in some of the events studied in this thesis. This thesis also found that when the media covers phenomena related to polarization, different concepts related to the topics become such an intertwined amalgam that it becomes difficult to draw direct conclusions as to which phenomena the polarization effects.

Key words: polarization, journalism, media framing, Finland, Yle, critical discourse analysis, conflict escalation, extreme groups, public broadcasting.

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# 1. Background and introduction

In 2015, Finland appeared to be dividing in half. The flow of asylum seekers to Europe has been steady for years now, but according to the annual report of Finnish Immigration Service, the year 2015 saw a radical increase in the numbers of asylum seekers in Finland (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2015, 3). The ongoing arrival of tens of thousands of asylum seekers sparked a charged public and political debate, which showed in the expanding coverage on the topic: between January and December 2014, the number of news articles with the search word “turvapaikanhakijat” (asylum seekers) amass to almost 1800 in Yle news service alone. During 2015, the number of articles almost tripled (search based on Yle’s search system in May 2017. Articles refer to Yle news articles in the Finnish language.)

Looking through news articles from the summer of 2015, the debate about opinions over asylum seekers seemed to not only start polarizing, but to merge with a debate over multiculturalism. That is when Member of Parliament Olli Immonen of the Finns Party caused controversy with his public Facebook status, calling for a “fight until the end for our homeland and one true Finnish nation” (Olli Immonen’s Facebook-status from 25th of July 2015; see fig. 1 in the Appendix). Immonen has a profile in taking strong stands against multiculturalism and Islam in saying, for instance, that the Finnish borders are leaking due to arrival of refugees and asylum seekers (Immonen in Suomen Sisu -website 2014). Therefore, I consider it likely that his Facebook-post was not coincidentally published on the same year of the peak in the arrival of asylum seekers to Finland.

This Facebook-status controversy sparked a large debate over his choice of words, escalating in mass demonstrations for tolerance most notably in Helsinki, labelled “Meillä on unelma”, (“We have a dream”). Other cities held similar, smaller events at the same time. Since then, a sharp discussion about the acceptance of multiculturalism intertwined with topics related to asylum seekers has been topical in the Finnish media.

Simultaneously, there has been a need to understand the opinions in Finnish public discussion. The general, colloquial understanding in the statements of politicians and the innuendos of news articles show that there appear to be two polar opposites of opinion in Finland in regard to the asylum seekers and multiculturalism and the connotations these topics call up. The press has been balancing between reporting both the “immigrant critic” as well as the “tolerant” viewpoints while also citing consultants and politicians about “two polar opposites of view” in the discussion (e.g. Uusi Suomi 2015; Suominen 2016). It is difficult to trace how the labelling of “two extremes” started, but the term has been used by officials (for example a police officer in the evening newspaper *Ilta-Sanomat*, 2015) as well as politicians. There even developed slurs between the “two groups”, most

likely in different internet forums. Reportedly Minister of Justice Jari Lindström, when asked to label the other polar opposite in the immigration debate, called the other side “suvakit”, which roughly translates as “overly tolerant” (Suominen 2016) and is considered a slur towards the liberal side of the debate. As recently as in March 2016, YleX youth channel of the Finnish Broadcasting Company asked the readers if they recognize who the polar opposites in the discussion are (Vainio 2016).

The generally heated atmosphere of sharing opinions had concrete impacts to journalism. In September 2015, the popular *Nyt*-magazine (a monthly supplement to *Helsingin Sanomat*) closed their comment section due to “ever stronger overreactions” from the public, referring to increased hate speech in various topics, including immigration-related themes (Pullinen 2015). Some other newspapers followed suit. Even the president of Finland inadvertently took a stand in the debate by sharing a column from *Iisalmen Sanomat*, which stated that most Finns are in neither polar opposite of the immigration debate, but somewhere in the middle, level-headed (Paretskoi in *Iisalmen Sanomat*, 2016).

Mapped against this atmosphere, it seems Finland has indeed been experiencing turmoil. The concern over harsher voices in the discussion appears to be similar around Europe, or at least in the Nordic countries. As Eide and Nikunen point out, “It seems the political debate on migration is more (and was earlier) polarized in Denmark. This may be due to the political climate, caused, among other reasons, by the relatively strong impact of Danish Peoples Party (...)” (Eide and Nikunen 2011, 4), and further:

“In Finland, the right-wing conservative party *Perussuomalaiset* (True Finns) gained unexpected support in the elections of 2008 – with an agenda hostile to immigrants. Issues of immigration and Islam are tied together in Finnish public discussions; thus on many websites concerning Islam, issues related to immigration policy are also raised. The public discussion is heated, containing criticism towards multicultural politics (...)” (Eide and Nikunen 2011, 4–5).

Thus, it seems clear that the discussion is not only related to asylum seekers, but to a larger debate about immigration and multiculturalism. It is not surprising that even academics have raised concern over the opinionated discussion. In 2016, the Tampere Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET) launched a research project about conciliating journalism and dealing with conflict sensitive subjects in the public discussion (Uta 2016). Clearly, there is a research gap in conceptualizing the situation and addressing the role of the media in the debate.

It is clear from the examples mentioned earlier that the media has a big role in the discussion, since most of the public debate about the matter is represented through the media. There are several analyses concerning the role of partisan media in political polarization, such as *Media and Political Polarization* by Markus Prior (2013) and *How the Mass Media Divide Us* by Diane C. Mutz (2006). However, the existing research on the media’s role in polarization appears largely

Americentric. For instance, Prior and Mutz examine the American media and the increase of partisan media. Campante and Hojman (2012) have examined “the links between media and political polarization by looking at the introduction of broadcast TV”, again in the United States (Campante and Hojman 2012, 79). Robinson and Mullinix (2015) have concentrated on elite polarization as “an increasingly salient aspect” of American news coverage (Robinson and Mullinix 2015, 261).

While this previous research is both helpful and partially relevant, it does not close the research gap of exploring the Finnish situation, and cannot be directly generalized to apply to Finnish media, as the Finnish media landscape differs largely from the American one. The United States has a plural and a rather partisan media landscape; Matthew Levedusky states that “for most of American history, the news media *were* partisan media”, and that since the rise of cable television and the Internet, the partisan media has again become “an important part of the American media landscape” (Levedusky 2013, 8). Finland on the other hand has a strong public broadcasting company and numerous commercial medias, and the major daily newspapers such as *Helsingin Sanomat* or evening newspapers such *Ilta-lehti* are independent, i.e. non-partisan (*Helsingin Sanomat* 2013; *Ilta-lehti*, no date of publishing; Lapintie 2016).

The role of media in fuelling, for example, ethnic or cultural polarization has been researched in, inter alia, the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide (Thompson 2007). There is also research literature about how the media tends to stereotypically portray immigrants under certain frames, such as Danny Hayes’ *Media Frames and the Immigration Debate* (Hayes 2008). The connections of these frames and their role in polarization are, however, not apparent in this research. The combination of analysing the way media discusses certain events and relating those findings with theories of polarization and conflict escalation appear to be less emphasised in the existing research.

Furthermore, there appears to be little research about the impact of media in polarization in the Nordic countries such as Finland. One example of such research is Eide and Nikunen’s *Media in Motion – Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region* (2011), which gives a great cross-section about certain trends concerning immigration topics in the Fennoscandic countries. It includes a chapter about how rape is framed in the Finnish media. The chapter makes an interesting point about how in Sweden, gendered violence has led to immigration debates, which in its turn has morphed into public discussions about who is included in the nation and who is not, a discussion of us vs. them. Keskinen writes in this chapter that in public discussions in “Sweden, following the murder of a young Kurdish-Swedish woman in 2002, two opposite poles were constructed – the ‘gender-equal Swedes’ and the ‘patriarchal immigrants’ (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2002; Bredström 2003).” (Keskinen 2011, 107).



So, the question of polarization of opinions in the Nordic countries has been raised, but whereas Keskinen asks “how is the nation and its boundaries constructed in relation to gender, sexuality and ‘race’/ethnicity in present-day multicultural Finland” through media coverage and political discussions about rape (Keskinen 2011, 108), my question is the role of the media itself in relation to polarization concerning the asylum seeker debate. Hence, the research questions of this thesis and the previous research by Eide and Nikunen are only broadly related to each other in terms of the thematic. In addition, Eide and Nikunen’s book is from 2011, and a lot has happened in Finland in the past 7 years since the book’s publishing that merits new research.

The question of media representation and the workings of journalism are also featured in Eide and Nikunen’s book, from the standpoints of covering multiculturalism in Norway and representations of ethnic minorities in Nordic media. In sum, the volume offers an admirable look to media and immigration issues in the Nordic countries and provides crucial background information about the polarized atmosphere in these countries. It does not, however, close the research gap of considering the media’s role in polarization, which as a phenomenon is connected to conflict escalation.

In sum, the value of this research is to take a closer look in the still topical atmosphere in Finland and pinpoint the role of media – in this research the case of Yle – in the polarization debate. Since neither polarization, extremism nor cultural encounters with asylum seekers are likely to be decreasing anytime soon, I believe this research will be a valuable addition to the existing research about how polarization and media are intertwined, highlighted by current events.

### *Research aims*

The aim of this research is to examine the polarization of opinions related to topics concerning the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism related debate of 2015–2016 in Finland, and to find out what role Finnish journalism, case example being Yle, has had in this conflict of opinion. This research will briefly characterize the opinion debate through examples from the Finnish media, and indicate if and how the media has defined these groups. My research will highlight the impact of journalistic choices during a situation where polarization of opinions appears strong in the public discussion. This research raises questions as to whether journalists influence polarization by, for example, choosing to cover polarizing topics using a particular frame, by labelling conflict parties, or otherwise influencing polarization through journalistic conventions. In my concluding remarks, I summarize the main findings and recap how they are related to conflict escalation.

In addition, this research seeks to bring clarity to the current atmosphere in Finland and to the opinionated crisis we are dealing with in the media and in the public discussion. In sum, this research will:

1. Seek to briefly conceptualise the polarization and clash of opinions in Finland related to topics concerning the 2015–2016 asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate.
2. Analyse the Finnish media by using examples from Yle news between 2015–2016 with the theories of media framing and critical discourse analysis.
3. Analyse how the resulting observations are connected to the framework of polarization and conflict escalation.

## 2. Literature review

This chapter will introduce the central research concerning the media's role in polarization as well as highlight aspects of polarization and conflict escalation theories. The current state of affairs in Finland shows that a merge between theories analysing journalism and peace and conflict theories is a highly fruitful starting point for this thesis. My key literature includes theories of polarization and conflict escalation, critical discourse analysis and media framing theories.

The need for research about the current state of affairs in Finland is indicated by, for example, Tampere University's current project concerning conciliating journalism and how it could help to address conflict sensitive topics in public discussion (University of Tampere, 2016). It is evident that although many known theories about conflict escalation and polarization exist, the way these theories string together in relation to the media has not been researched extensively, especially regarding the Nordic countries. Thus, the question is: how do these theories tie together to highlight the role of media in polarization, and how what is the role of the Finnish media in polarization?

### *A review of previous research on the topic*

I find that concerning the merge between conflict theories and media studies, the role of the media in atrocities that have already happened has been extensively documented. This is the case, for example, in the role of the media in the Rwandan genocide, where the media was clearly orchestrating polarization between groups from the very beginning (see e.g. Thompson 2007). These findings are

mostly related to polarization that has already manifested itself as a physical conflict. On a less violently polarizing level, the media sphere of the United States has been a topic of interest to researchers.

The media landscape of the United States appears to be based in roughly two camps: liberal and conservative. Tim Groseclose and Jeffrey Milyo (2005) composed a research to measure the level of media bias in the United States. Their results indicated that, for example, Fox News and the Washington Post were two of the most conservative outlets, whereas CBS Evening News appears to lean towards liberal values (Groseclose and Milyo 2005, 1211–1212). Since the field of politics in the United States is also roughly divided into conservatives (Republicans) and liberals (Democrats) (see e.g. Matthew Levendusky: *The Partisan Sort*, 2009), it is no wonder that the media landscape imitates the political reality – or vice versa.

Several analyses have been carried out concerning the role of partisan media in political polarization, by, inter alia, Markus Prior (2013) Diane C. Mutz (2006). According to Prior, the idea of linking partisan media messages with growing polarization is “tempting”, (Prior 2013, 102), but he argues that there is no firm evidence in partisan media creating more partisanship amongst “ordinary Americans” (Prior 2013, 101). Mutz on the other hand proposes that “scholars are nowhere near a consensus on whether the mass public is more polarized than it has been in the past and, if it is, relative to precisely when” (Mutz 2006, 218).

However, what appears negligibly researched are the effects of a public, non-partisan media on polarization or public opinion. In Finland, there are no major partisan media (referring to political partisanship) that would be as powerful as the major non-partisan news sources, such as Yle and the evening newspapers *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Iltaalehti*. According to one website that measures the weekly accessibility of different online media, the five most read media week after week in 2016 were *Ilta-Sanomat*, *Iltaalehti*, Yle, *Helsingin Sanomat* and MTV, in various different orders (TNX Metrix, a random check of different weeks in 2016). The lack of a purely partisan mass media in Finland has historical reasons. According to Jyrkiäinen, a lot of county-based newspapers became the major newspapers of their region in Finland after the Second World War (Jyrkiäinen 2012, 73). This led many of them to give up on their political partisanship. Indeed, since the beginning of 2012, over 93 percent of Finnish newspapers are independent (Jyrkiäinen 2012, 74).

The results of the research concerning media and polarization in the United States is not directly applicable to the situation of media and polarization in Finland. The tools and theories in the existing literature on American media and polarization are still useful, and this research utilizes the existing knowledge and applies it in this thesis. As the media (and political) landscape at least in

Finland and most likely in other Nordic countries differs vastly of that of the United States, I believe my research will provide valuable information as to the working of the media regarding polarization in Finland.

Some interesting research has also been conducted, again mainly in the United States, about the way polarization is communicated through the media (e.g. Robinson and Mullinix 2016). Robinson and Mullinix remark that “extensive literature shows that the influence of an event or issue on the mass public depends critically on how it is framed by news media (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Elenbaas & de Vreese, 2008; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997).” (Robinson and Mullinix 2016, 262). Robinson and Mullinix focus their research in analysing how elite polarization is communicated through the media. Even though their target of interest, elite polarization, differs from my own research aims, their research provides valuable ideas as to the impact of the news frame on public opinion.

What appears to be scantily researched is the exact role of the media in either creating or otherwise influencing polarization as an agent itself. What has been done in, for example, in Robinson and Mullinix’s research is to analyse an already existing polarization and see how the media has communicated it. What seems to be missing is to see whether media or news conventions can effect polarization by using frames, word choices and other similar routines.

As to research about the media’s role in polarization in the Nordic countries, or specifically Finland, minimal research appears to have been done of this specific topic. This could be because the current wave of polarization appears to be a rather recent phenomenon, and the time span of this research is very fresh. There are, however, some resources on the Nordic and domestic situation. For example, Karina Horsti’s dissertation *Vierauden rajat: monikulttuurisuus ja turvapaikanhakijat journalismissa* from 2005 shows that in principle, the conversation about division concerning accepting or rejecting attitudes towards multiculturalism and asylum seekers is not new. In fact, Horsti disagrees with the notion of several contemporary researches which state that the media is only widening a gap between “us” and “others”, but regards the process as more complicated than this simple division (Horsti 2005, 12). She further points out that the media often uses several, even contradictory frames in covering immigration (Horsti 2005, 15). Horsti’s dissertation’s interests are much wider in scope than this thesis, as her focus is in the duality of the media in being both positive as well as negative in topics related to multiculturalism and asylum seekers (Horsti 2015, 277), and thus sheds light into the different ways the Finnish media has framed these subjects. Her dissertation, thus, focuses on different representations provided by the Finnish media, rather than concentrates on polarization.

Concerning the more recent arrival of the asylum seekers, the Migration Policy Institute states that the worsening of the 2015 refugee crisis has deepened political polarization in the West, leading to the use of harsher language even in mainstream politicians' discourse (Migration Policy Institute, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015). An important source for providing background to this phenomenon is *Media in motion: cultural complexity and migration in the Nordic region* (Eide and Nikunen 2011). This book sheds light to the fact that the Nordic countries have been exposed to many different cultural and social changes because of increased migration for four decades already (Eide and Nikunen 2011, 1). Nevertheless, migration is "met with growing scepticism", and the Nordic countries have experienced an increase over "multicultural policies" (ibid.). Eide and Nikunen's work serves to demonstrate how the discussion around the topics of media and immigration are current in other Nordic countries as well as in Finland. It is also a useful cross-section of some viewpoints related to media frames and the immigration issues both inside and outside of Finland.

One interesting note in the discussion of polarization induced by the media is how much politicians' discourse is covered unfiltered. In this way, the media allows the politicians' messages and agendas to reach the audiences as such. In her article, *How the Mass Media Divide Us*, Mutz refers to Dan Hallin's study about how public opinion in the United States shifted towards being unsupportive of the Vietnam War (Mutz 2006). According to Hallin's study, this was due to the divided elite opinions that the reporters covered as such, thus influencing the range of opinions of the public (Mutz 2006, 239). This phenomenon is known as bracketing, where the media "define the range of legitimate opinions" by "defining the boundaries of acceptable controversy" (Mutz 2006, 239). Mutz notes that since the media tend to rely on official sources, even extreme opinions voiced by politicians are likely to be covered by the press (Mutz 2006, 239).

According to Mutz, the media provides legitimacy to certain opinions of the politicians by simply covering them regularly (Mutz 2006, 239). Therefore, even if the source of the polarized opinions is the politicians, the media is actively taking part in the process by informing the public about those opinions. Mutz suggests that through this process, even opinions of a polarized elite group of politicians can become "a wider range of acceptable views to the public and thus discouraging consensus" (Mutz 2006, 239). She goes on to conclude that since the range of views offered by the media "represents greater extremes than in the past", it is no wonder if the public seems to support more extreme views than before (ibid.). Mutz's views, even though concerning mainly the mass media of the United States, provide valuable insights for my research. Her notions of politicians as the origin of polarization, but media as the necessary accelerator in the process, are an essential part of my hypothesis of the role of the Finnish media in influencing polarization. Combining her ideas

with theories of polarization and deepening into the causes and effects of the polarization process will provide ample theoretical grounds on which to build this research on.

## **2.1. Introduction to the theoretical framework**

For this research, I have chosen to use a theoretical combination of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and media frame analysis, the results being interpreted with the help of polarization and conflict escalation theories. My research data consists of news articles and a television broadcast that I have selected using quantitative methods. I have chosen a twofold analysis: I analyse my data with media framing and CDA methods, and weigh the results within the framework of polarization and conflict escalation theories. This provides a holistic, conceptualized picture of the phenomena under analysis.

As I am considering the role of journalism in polarization, I have first analysed samples from Yle news, my selected source of data, in order to make conclusions about its role in topics related to multiculturalism and asylum seekers. My data consists of selected Yle news articles and one tv-broadcast.

### *2.1.1. Media framing theory*

The reason I have chosen media framing theory as the other key methodological framework for this research is because the tools of media framing theory allow me to analyse certain, possibly recurring frames from the batch of articles I use as data. Scheufele describes the current wave of media framing theory as viewing the mass media as an element that has “a strong impact by constructing social reality” (Scheufele 1999, 105). He quotes McQuail as describing media as “framing images of reality” (Scheufele 1999, 105, quoting McQuail 1994) and notes that in the arena of political communication, “media framing has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of this social constructivism.” (Scheufele 1999, 105). This refers to the idea that media sets the way in which certain matters are discussed. The power of framing is in its ability to shape our reality and setting the reference point to world events through its representation of chosen points of views. As Tuchman points out: “---the news media set the frame in which citizens discuss public events”, highlighting the power of the media to influence “the quality of the civic debate”. (Tuchman 1978, ix). Therefore, the theory of media framing is a robust tool to analyse whether the research data contains frames, ideologies or choices of words that can be linked to polarization.

The field of media framing theory – or theories – appears rather fragmented (see Scheufele 1999). Scheufele goes as far as to say that the research concerning media framing is “characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness”, due to a lack of a shared theoretical model of framing research (Scheufele 1999, 103). Scheufele goes on to develop “a process model of framing” (Scheufele 1999, 103) and offers some analytical tools concerning media framing theories. One viewpoint is that framing is a way of promoting certain aspects of reality over others (Scheufele 1999, 107). “The framing and presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events” (Scheufele 1999, 107, citing Price, Tewksbury, and Powers 1995). This serves to illustrate the importance of analysing media frames and what their potential effects to the audience are.

Entman has highlighted how framing necessarily involves both selection and salience. He refers to framing as selecting certain aspects of reality and thus making them more salient than others. (Entman 1993, 52). With salience, Entman refers to making a piece of information to appear memorable or important to the audience, thus increasing the probability of the receiver perceiving this piece of information as well as memorizing it. (ibid.) Gamson and Modigliani note the interaction of the media discourse with the public discourse, while being careful to not imply a causality between the two in their research. They state that “---media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse.” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 2).

It appears that through these process, the public as well as the media reify certain definitions and frames, such as the asylum seeker and multiculturalism debate and its parties. This interaction between the media and the public on framing seems to hold true in the Finnish debate: although it is unclear whether it was originally the public or the media who framed the discussion as a mainly two-sided debate between the immigrant critics and the tolerant, it seems plausible that the labels have been cemented by the media and the public together.

However, media frames are not created in a vacuum and then forced upon an audience by the mass media with no resistance. People have pre-existing “structures or schemas” which influence the interpretation of information (Scheufele 1999, 105). Scheufele has highlighted three dimensions in news processing, referring to what Kosicki and McLeod (1990) have identified. They can be divided into active processing (i.e. seeking for additional sources, the underlying assumption being that the information provided by the mass media is incomplete or skewed “by the intentions of the communicator” (Scheufele 1999, 105); reflecting integrators, who process the information they

have received by, for example, reflecting on it with others (ibid.); and selective scanners, who only seek out information relevant to them (ibid.). The act of news processing is a topic in itself, but here I find a clear connection with the polarization theories: since group solidarity and belonging to one's own "bubble" of likeminded people appears to be a strong part of the polarization process, media framing can easily be an influential factor in reinforcing certain bubbles over others. Especially for those who belong to the group coined as "selective scanners", certain types of news are bound to have much more effect than others, depending on how much they support the world-view of the reader.

Not all frames are deliberate and calculated, of course. Scheufele quotes Gitlin, who points out that sometimes frames are tools of the journalists to "organise the world", both for journalist as well as consumers of journalism (Scheufele 1999, 106, citing Gitlin 1980). News stories can also become routinized. As Gans puts it, journalists have developed story selection methods to make the task of reporting more manageable (Gans 1979, 78).

As this research analyses a topic that, based on the data, is largely influenced by politicians' viewpoints, the aspect of political influence in mass media must be raised. Gans has theorized the story selection methods of journalists (Gans 1979; Scheufele 1999) and has identified five ways on how journalists have routinized story selection (Gans 1979, 78–79). The one I find particularly poignant for the purposes of this research, and the one highlighted by Scheufele as well, is the "mirror theory", proposing that "events determine story selection, with journalists simply holding a mirror to them and reflecting their image to the audience." (Gans 1979, 79; Scheufele 1999, 116). Scheufele suggests that through this approach, frames suggested by politicians are "adopted by journalists and incorporated in their coverage of an issue or event". (Scheufele 1999, 116). This type of an approach seems to hold particularly true in the events chosen for analysis in this thesis, and as such, Gans' and Scheufele's ideas are on point in analysing the role of media in giving space for politicians to discuss topics regarding asylum seekers.

The data of this research consists of most shared (on Facebook) and most read Yle articles from chosen key events between 2015 and 2016 and one television broadcast. This method of article selection is supported by Scheufele's findings concerning media framing and Entman's thoughts on frame salience, as discussed above. On the one hand, media is a constructor of reality through its message (social constructivism) (Scheufele 1999, 105). This implies that the story most dominantly portrayed by the media by, for example, frame repetition through many articles, is most likely the one that is thought to represent our reality. Entman's (1993) suggestions on frame salience link with the importance of the most shared and read article(s): since frames can highlight certain



aspects of reality, the most shared and read article(s) can give a glimpse to which news frames have been most disseminated.

Taking an example from the realm of immigration news coverage, Hayes (2008) mentions in his analysis *Media Frames and the Immigration Debate*: “Indeed, recent work suggests that alterations in the amount or content of news coverage of immigration can have effects on public opinion.” (Hayes 2008, 1). Hayes also reminds us that exposure to frames does not always mean that there are changes or reinforcement in one’s attitude (Hayes 2008, 2). According to Hayes, the effect depends on how credible the source is: in other words, what matters is who speaks in the article (ibid). Hayes (2008) went on to find that in the news stories he sampled regarding immigration debate, the negative stories (ones against immigration) were citing government officials and politicians more often than the “immigrant welcoming” side of the debate. Hayes’ research drew conclusions as to how news coverage can in this regard shift the public opinion through who is given space to talk. Thus, Hayes’ findings serve to prove the importance of paying attention to the main speakers of the articles in analysis.

Finally, I find Pan and Kosicki’s observations on media framing and the tools they offer of particular use for this thesis. Pan and Kosicki have observed that the news discourse operates on the realm of “shared beliefs about a society”. Often these shared beliefs are taken “for granted”, and are “elusive” in nature. (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 57). As Pan and Kosicki have thus highlighted the way frames can penetrate the very core of our beliefs about a society, they have identified four different categories of “framing devices in news discourse”: syntactical structures, script structures, thematic structures and rhetorical structures. (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). These tools will be further operationalised and referred to in chapter 2.3.1.

### *2.1.2. Critical discourse analysis*

According to Jorgen and Philips, critical discourse analysis “is ‘critical’ in the sense that it aims to reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power.” (Jorgensen and Philips 2002, 63). It seeks to explain rather than merely describe existing realities (Fairclough 2012, 9). Jorgensen and Philips further point out that critical discourse analysis does not view itself as a neutral field, but is literally critical in its approach, seeking to speak for “oppressed social groups” (Jorgensen and Philips 2002, 64). In general, critical discourse analysis, or CDA, has been used to cover topics such as mass communication and racism, nationalism and identity (Jorgensen and Philips 2002). It has also been

used to analyse representations of asylum seekers and refugees in the news in a few instances (e.g. Baker et al. 2008; Khosravini 2009), and it has been even used to analyse television shows (e.g. Bilal et al. 2012).

Critical discourse analysis includes the notion of power relations, a quality that might go amiss in frame analysis, and it refrains from merely describing realities, but attempts to show them to be “effects of structures” that the analyst presumes to reveal (Fairclough 2012, 9). As such, critical discourse analysis, or CDA, is not a school of theory, but rather a distinct perspective, a lens through which issues can be analysed and discussed (Bilal et al. 2012, 378). Ramanathan and Tan describe CDA as highlighting “the traces of cultural and ideological meaning” (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 57), showing the ability of CDA to discuss matters beyond mere description of events and to analyse the underlying structures of discourse of chosen case examples. For example, Bilal et al. have used CDA to “analyse the hidden objectives of politicians and anchors by analysing certain talk shows which are telecasted on television” (Bilal et al. 2012, 379).

I have chosen CDA as the other theoretical framework of this thesis precisely because of its critical aim at identifying structures and discourses beneath the surface level of discourse. CDA allows me to analyse and interpret data in a multidimensional way, rooting out questions key to polarization. It allows me to discern whether there are ideological traces in the news routines of the journalists, who get to speak in the articles, and so on.

This thesis uses particularly Van Dijk’s and Machin and Mayr’s notions on CDA. Van Dijk describes the power of the media as not being restricted to influencing audiences, but also having an impact in broader structures of society, such as “social, cultural political, or economic power structures” (Van Dijk 1995a, 9). He argues that the “mind control” by the media is particularly effective when the audience do not realise they are being controlled, and accept the news coverage as true and legitimate (Van Dijk 1995a, 11). Van Dijk also speaks of ideologies as systems of beliefs (Van Dijk 2000, 6), the uncovering of which have been utilized in the field of media discourse studies (Ramanathan and Tan 2015). Van Dijk explains ideologies as “long-term processes of socialization and other forms of social information processing”, which are “gradually acquired by members of a group or culture.” In other words, ideologies represent how a group sees itself, in terms of identity, goals and resources. (Van Dijk 1995b, 18). He further notes that ideologies are “usually self-serving”, and explains that we come to represent ourselves – the “Us” – as usually positive, and the “Others” as negative. (ibid).

I find this notion an important aspect in terms of the idea of a polarization. When it comes to the role of the mass media in relation to ideologies, Ramanathan and Tan have concluded in

their article *Application of Critical Discourse Analysis in Media Discourse Studies*: “---mass media play a significant role in the production of beliefs, prejudice and domination over the social context as mass media tend to marginalise *Others* and misconstrue an event.” (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 66). I find that the theory of CDA is thus a critical tool in revealing the possible ideologies that the media might disseminate or underpin, and I find that the ideological power of grouping people into “Us” and “Others” is a valuable link to the theories of polarization in this thesis.

When it comes to practical tools, Machin and Mayr (2012) have constructed a highly versatile theoretical toolkit to conducting critical discourse analysis. They note that there is “no single, homogenous version of CDA”, but the common factor between different authors is the notion of “language as a means of social construction---“ (Machin and Mayr 2012, 4). Machin and Mayr will be covered more extensively in chapter 2.3.1., in defining the key concepts of CDA and media framing theory.

In sum, the media frame analysis and critical discourse analysis will provide clarity to questions such as:

- What institution or what kind of a reality do the main sources in the data represent?
- What words are used to describe the agents in the story?
- What kind of a reality concerning polarization is the data manifesting?
- Do journalists label the polar opposite opinion parties?
- Do the groups themselves identify to those labels in their statements?
- What kind of a reality is journalism depicting regarding polarization using news routines?

### *2.1.3. Polarization theories and conflict escalation*

To give the results of the media framing analysis and CDA a context and meaning, I will tie the analysis together with polarization and, to an extent, conflict escalation theories. Some of my key literature on polarization comes from Esteban and Ray (1994) and Esteban and Schneider (2008). In addition, I have found Randall Collins’ (2012) astute points about conflict escalation and the role polarization plays in that process highly useful.

Esteban and Schneider remark that “various forms of polarization” increase the risk of violent conflict, both within the society as well as between nation states (Esteban and Schneider 2008, 131). It is a phenomenon that should not go amiss if we are to secure the welfare of our society, be it a country of high risk for conflict or not. Esteban and Schneider quote polarization as resulting from

“the interaction of within-group identity and across-group alienation” (Esteban and Ray 1994, quoting Esteban and Schneider 2008, 132). In other words, polarization can be reduced to an “us vs. them” setting, where the “other” is seen as something inherently not belonging to one’s own group of reference – a thought shared in Van Dijk’s concept of an ideology in CDA (see Van Dijk 1995b, 22). This, in short, is what causes “us” and “them” belonging in two different extremes, with no grey common area in between.

Esteban and Schneider note that the concept of polarization as a seemingly obvious matter is sometimes accepted too hastily and applied with carelessness (Esteban and Schneider 2008, 133). They therefore go on to further define polarization as, loosely speaking, “the extent to which the population is *clustered* around a small number of distant *poles* (Esteban and Schneider 2008, 133). Esteban and Schneider’s definition about polarization is strongly in the context of polarization as a part of a conflict, and as such notes the impact of societal tensions in creating groups that reject the other and identify with one’s own group of reference (ibid.).

Esteban and Ray (1994) have written specifically about the measurement of polarization. They pay particular attention to how polarization links to tensions, such as inequalities or even rebellions (Esteban and Ray 1994, 820). Their interest is therefore mainly in the dynamics of polarization in a society and the possible conflict this entails. However, their definitions and conceptualisations of polarization are highly useful and concise for the purposes of this thesis.

Esteban and Ray state that a society is polarized when individuals can be grouped “according to some vector of characteristics into “clusters,” such that each cluster is very ‘similar’ in terms of the attributes of its members, but different clusters have members with very ‘dissimilar’ attribute” (Esteban and Ray 1994, 819). They further define:

“The polarization of a distribution of individual attributes must exhibit the following basic features.  
FEATURE 1: There must be a high degree of homogeneity within each group.  
FEATURE 2: There must be a high degree of heterogeneity across groups.  
FEATURE 3: There must be a small number of significantly sized groups. In particular, groups of insignificant size (e.g., isolated individuals) carry little weight.” (Esteban and Ray 1994, 824).

Thus, Esteban and Ray’s observation about reifying polarization as a distribution of a particular characteristic or an attribute is one of the key concepts of this thesis. As an example, Esteban and Ray take the attribute of income, but they also note that one attribute example could be an opinion index about a specific political issue (Esteban and Ray 1994, 825). In this the context of this research, that attribute could be, for example, “favourable attitude towards issues related to asylum seekers or multiculturalism”. Esteban and Ray’s examples show that their definitions of

polarization are usable for the purposes of this thesis and are conceptualised in a way that they can be adopted for a qualitative study such as this one.

Buskens, Corten and Weesie have written about the connections between social networks and polarization (Buskens, Corten and Weesie 2008). They have conducted a study on the extent to which polarization emerges in segregated groups and “inefficient behaviour persists as a result of the initial network and the initial distribution of behaviour.” (Buskens, Corten and Weesie 2008, 209). As such, their notions about how polarization emerges provide an interesting context for understanding the dynamics of the situation this thesis handles. For example, they note the power of clustered behaviour or opinions within local networks as one way leading to polarization (Buskens, Corten and Weesie 2008, 206) and remark the influence of social ties and behaviour in the process (ibid.).

A conclusive definition of conflict is difficult to come by, as each researcher seems to approach the topic from a different angle. Although this thesis does not describe a conflict per se, the concept is worthwhile to explore briefly, as polarization is related to conflict escalation. One definition is given by McGoldrick and Lynch in their article *Peace Journalism* (2000). They describe conflict as a process where two or more actors “try to pursue incompatible aims or GOALS while trying to stop the other(s) from pursuing their goals” (McGoldrick and Lynch 2000, 6). They also remind that “conflict is not the same as violence”, even if the words are often used synonymously (ibid.). Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall describe conflict as a “universal feature of human society”, and similar to McGoldrick and Lynch, cite incompatible goals as a primary feature of a conflict (Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 7). Conflicts are fuelled by inequalities, such as scarce resources, poor communication between the conflict parties, lack of trust as well as unequal relations and competing values (McGoldrick and Lynch 2000, 7; Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 8).

These definitions tie well with polarization theories. The exact role of polarization in conflict escalation seems to be difficult to trace, but in one conflict escalation and de-escalation model, polarization as a phenomenon is the third step in this path (Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 13). Randall Collins has analysed polarization in a group in detail in *C-Escalation and D-Escalation: A Theory of the Time-Dynamics of Conflict* (Collins 2012). Collins’ astute descriptions of the emotional processes of polarization are a useful addition to the theoretical framework of this thesis regarding the media’s role in polarization. Collins has raised some very interesting points about the characteristics of polarization and group solidarity. For instance, Collins says group solidarity is a “key weapon” in conflict (Collins 2012, 2) and explains how polarization is connected to a group

imagining what the opposite party is doing or saying. As Collins puts it, “This supports my point that it is the perception of atrocities that produces polarization, not just violence per se” (Collins 2012, 4).

#### *2.1.4. On news routines*

As this thesis deals with an abundance of news articles while analysing the role of journalism, the question of news routines and their significance arises. Because this thesis analyses text based media as well as a televised programme, the use of interviewees and their impact in the media is a journalistic routine that cannot be bypassed. Hence, I have added to the theoretical framework and tools of this thesis the following notions concerning the use of quotations in journalism.

Bell (1991) has argued that most of the news content consists of the reporter using quotations (Jullian 2011, 768, citing Bell 1991). Sometimes the use of quotations merges with the journalists’ own discourse, potentially in a way that makes it difficult to tell apart which thought comes from the source, which from the writer (ibid.) This means that while this thesis pays full attention to those parts of the news articles that feature the reporter’s own words, it emphasizes that quotations used in a news article are an active choice made by the journalist.

Jullian brings into attention Scollon’s (1998) suggestion:

“---the use of quotations is a form of writer’s control over the material s/he presents, since the reporter retains the ‘authorship’ (the right to find the wording for the ideas) but delegates the ‘principalship’ (the responsibility for what is said) and, by this delegation, the reporter stands aside from the argument.” (Jullian 2011, 769, citing Scollon 1998).

I find this notion highly useful for the purposes of this thesis. As a lot of the news articles selected for this thesis consist mainly of citing the interviewees, it might feel like the role of the journalist is diminished, as the interviewee has the main role in the article and the journalist stands somewhere far behind, distancing themselves from the active choices of the text in the article. Following Scollon’s and Jullian’s reasoning, this is not the case: the choice of quotations is still a power that lies in the hand of the writer, not with the interviewee. As such, it becomes the active choice of the journalist to select which citations serve the purpose of the news piece, and what kind of a story they formulate.

This notion is also connected to Scheufele’s (1999) observations about whose agenda gets through by journalists’ choices of direct citation. Scheufele refers to Gans (1979) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996) in discussing a model where journalists cover events simply by directly reporting

what is happening to the audience, as if holding a mirror to the real-world events and providing that to the readers and viewers (Gans 1979, 79; Scheufele 1999, 115). Similarly, the use of quotations can intuitively feel like the most “truthful” or “neutral” way of relating a matter: by simply holding an imaginary mirror in front of the interviewee and using their citations to tell the story. Scollon notes that “quotation is used by reporters to delegate responsibility for their stories while retaining the power to craft the wordings” (Scollon 1998, 217). Jullian says that since journalists tend to use “external voices” and allow them to speak more loudly than journalists themselves, it is through this “choice of the informants” that “the authors may convey their views”, choosing what information to include and what to exclude (Jullian 2011, 767). This, Jullian points out, also means the ideological choices of the journalist are present: they are the ones who decide who is worth interviewing and what information is relevant (ibid.). Jullian calls this tinting the story “in such a way that the readers get the desired view”, without the journalist having to commit themselves too strongly to the perspective offered by the interviewees (ibid.)

Therefore, while this thesis does not concentrate on the lexical or other semiotic choices of the interviewees and sources in news articles, it will pay due attention to the use of quotations and selected sources as a choice of the journalist to craft the story and as means to suggest a frame or to otherwise influence the story. This thesis thus chooses to view the journalistic practice of using plenty of quotations in a news article as an active choice by the journalist, and therefore places due responsibility to the media for the possible consequences of this routine.

## **2.2. Defining the key concepts**

In this chapter, I will revisit the central theories presented in the literature review and define the key concepts that I have selected for this thesis.

This thesis refers to the “asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate” of 2015–2016, which is a general name I have given to the situation during that year when an unprecedented amount of asylum seekers arrived in Finland (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2015, 3). The reactions during that year spanned from individuals accommodating asylum seekers in their own homes (see e.g. Natri in Yle news, 2015) to others attacking reception centres with petrol bombs (e.g. Savela in Yle news, 2016).

This thesis is primarily concerned with the polarization debate that revolves around the issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism. It is clear that these concepts are

mostly a part of the same public discussion. When street patrol gangs such as Soldiers of Odin claim to fight for “a white Finland” (Ahjopalo in Yle news, 2015), they do not need to mention asylum seekers to make it clear that immigrants of any sort are not a part of their ideal Finland.

The concept of polarization or polar opposites of opinion in this thesis is my translation and interpretation of the Finnish word “ääripää”. This concept has been used, for example, in the lead-up to Yle’s tv-broadcast A2-ilta, and as a general term in the discussions of politicians about the situation. The word “ääripää” literally translates as “extremities”, meaning two polar opposites of something. As the concept of polarization refers to groups clustering around a distant pole and maintaining identification with their own reference group (Esteban and Schneider 2008, 133), I have deemed the concept of polarization as the best conceptualization of the situation in Finland for the purposes of this thesis.

### *2.2.1. Key concepts of media framing theory and CDA*

For the analysis of this thesis I have selected a number of conceptual tools from both media framing theory as well as CDA. As this thesis examines several news text articles and one tv-broadcast, I have chosen tools that work well in analysing both mediums.

Starting with tools of media framing theory, Pan and Kosicki have identified four different categories of “framing devices in news discourse”, which represent different “structural dimensions of news discourse”. They are syntactical structures, script structures, thematic structures and rhetorical structures. (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). Of these, I mostly use the syntactical structures, thematic structures and rhetorical structures.

Syntactical structures refer to, on a basic level, “stable patterns of the arrangement of words or phrases into sentences”. In news, the most important or catchy items are often at the top, starting with the headline, while further reading reveals more background information and finally, a closure (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). According to Pan and Kosicki, the headline is the “most salient clue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers’ minds”, and hence they call it “the most powerful framing device of the syntactical structure” (ibid.).

Thematic structures refer to stories that are not covering an event as such, but rather are concerned with an issue or topic. (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 60). Pan and Kosicki describe this type of news piece as containing a hypothesis, a selected theme, which is then tested by evidence based on the “journalist’s observations of actions or quotations of a source” used to support the hypothesis.



(ibid.) This is a news structure I identify from my years in the news room: a topic is raised, say, the issue of racism in job hunt. Then, the journalist, having decided this to be the theme of the story, makes phone calls and finds people to either support or contradict this notion, or in the “best” case, interviews opposing sides about the topic. The hypothesis, state Pan and Kosicki, “does not have to be the headline or lead sentence” Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61), which means that the hypothesis might be folded in the article rather than immediately visible in the first lines.

The rhetorical structures are what Pan and Kosicki use to describe certain stylistic choices by the journalists “in relation to their intended effects” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61). They introduce five framing devices by Gamson and Modigliani which include “metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions” and “visual images” (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 2; Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61). An example of a rhetorical device would be to have the interviewee’s picture taken in front of the national flag, and both sources as well as journalists use rhetorical devices, albeit journalists tend to use them to “invoke images, increase salience of a point, and increase vividness of a report” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61).

This thesis will also utilize Pan and Kosicki’s notions of lexical choices. They note that “lexical choices constitute an important aspect of news discourse construction”, and that the power of the aforementioned four structural dimensions have “varying power of signification” when they are filled with lexical elements (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 62). Pan and Kosicki identify the concepts of a designator, signifier and signified. A designator means the choice of words or labels that establishes “a correspondence between a signifier and ‘signified’”. It also puts the signified “in a specific cognitive category.” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 62). For example, news reports might use words like “sources” or “the Administration” as designators, which are lexical choices that give a statement authority (ibid.). The choice of a designator is often a “powerful cue signifying an underlying frame” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 63).

In addition to these tools, I have selected Entman’s four functions of a frame to help decipher how the media is using framing to influence how an issue is interpreted. Entman has observed that frames

*“define problems* – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits (...); *diagnose causes* – identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgments* – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and *suggest remedies* – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects.” (Entman 1993, 52).

These framing functions serve as an overall guideline to map out what are the different ways a frame can manifest itself in both news text as well as in a television broadcast.

From critical discourse analysis, I have selected some of Van Dijk's critical news text analysis as a guideline for asking specific questions from the data, and Machin and Mayr's notions on how to do critical discourse analysis for further specific tools of analysis. According to Van Dijk, some "obvious research questions" are questions like: "Who are the (main, secondary) actors of the news story?", "How are these actors described, from which point of view?" and "Who are used as sources, and how are such sources legitimated?" (Van Dijk 1987, 19). These questions form the very basis of my critical discourse analytic view in this thesis.

From Van Dijk's CDA concepts, I have selected the notion of "*us* versus *them*", referring to an ideology that separates the group that is viewed as "us" and viewing it as inherently positive, and representing the other groups as negative (Van Dijk 1995b, 22; Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 59). "This categorization is a part of what Van Dijk identifies as an ideology, a word referring to a shared "system of beliefs" (Van Dijk 2000, 6). Additionally, I have chosen to use Van Dijk's observations concerning interaction on both macro and micro levels. Van Dijk observes that everyday interaction includes macro- and microlevels, which form "one unified whole". He notes that

"a racist speech in parliament is a discourse at the microlevel of social interaction in the specific situation of a debate, but at the same time may enact or be a constituent part of legislation or the reproduction of racism at the macrolevel." (Van Dijk 2001, 354).

These notions of Van Dijk are particularly useful when discussing how certain frames can be transmitted from one level of discourse to another, and I find this observation to be applicable in conceptualizing how the media can help reproduce opinions of, for example, politicians, by reporting them repetitively.

From Machin and Mayr's CDA approaches I have selected a variety of tools for different aspects of the articles in this thesis. They are the use of "persuading with abstraction", such as rhetoric and metaphors (Machin and Mayr 2012, 163), connotations, and ways to represent people, such as functionalisation and impersonalisation. Metaphors, say Machin and Mayr, are a way to replace concrete processes with abstractions (Machin and Mayr 2012, 164). In using a metaphor, one transports the process of understanding "from one realm or conceptual domain to another" (Machin and Mayr 2012, 166, citing Lakoff, 1993 and Lakoff and Nunez, 1997). Metaphor is also listed as a "rhetorical trope" and it can either simplify processes, obscure what has actually happened as well as make a situation sound more positive or negative than it actually is (Machin and Mayr 2012, 167). The use of metaphor involves a "target domain", which is the concept being described through a metaphor, and a "source domain", the realm of concepts from which we draw upon to form a metaphor

(Machin and Mayr 2012, 165). Using the tool of a metaphor is particularly relevant in this study, as one of the key aspects of polarization on a sociological level is related to how we *perceive* the other side and the atrocities they execute (Collins 2012, 1). As Esteban and Ray note, polarization into different clusters in society demands that each cluster has similar attributes in relation to each other, but different attributes in relation to the other cluster or pole (Esteban and Ray 1994, 819). Thus, the use of metaphors can expose ways in which the media reinforces certain attributes through abstraction.

Word connotations belong in the group of semiotic choices (Machin and Mayr 2012, 30), and this thesis uses the tool of connotation selectively in some analysis. In its simplest form, CDA asks what words are used, and what choices has the author made in selecting certain words over others (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). Often, a word brings about associations (*ibid.*), and can therefore evoke very different connotations. As journalists are the authors of their texts, their choices of words are not random, and far from meaningless. The choice of certain words over others is, in my opinion, what helps to produce a certain frame in a news piece. As Entman puts it: “Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience.” (Entman 1993, 53). In this context, the choices of words, especially when repeated, can partake in evoking a particular frame, and it then depends on the frame whether those words highlight a polarization or juxtaposition or not.

Final tools I use from Machin and Mayr are to do with the representation of people, including the concepts of functionalisation and impersonalisation. Machin and Mayr point out that as with any kinds of communications related resources, the communicator – in this case, the journalist – has a wide range of choices to select from to decide how to represent individuals or groups of people (Machin and Mayr 2012, 77). As with lexical choices, the words used for representation matter. Impersonalisation as well as functionalisation belong in the realm of “classification of social actors” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 79). Impersonalisation refers to the act of using an entire institution as the speaker – in cases like “the police say”, instead of “policewoman Jaana Virtanen says”. In such cases, it is used “to give extra weight to a particular statement” as well as to “conceal who actually believes what and who is responsible in each case”. (Machin and Mayr 2012, 79–80).

Functionalisation is used when the target of description is presented through what they do instead of who they are. An example of this would be to say: “The director-general of the police Seppo Kolehmainen says”, instead of “Seppo Kolehmainen says”. Using functionalization thusly can make the claim sound much more official and instil a note of authority to the message. Functionalisation can also be used to dehumanize, when only the roles of people are highlighted, not

their personas (such as in “victim”, “immigrant” or “the demonstrators”). (Machin and Mayr 2012, 82). Use of “functional honorifics” comes very close to functionalization, since it is also used as a way to promote a person’s authority by emphasizing their honorifics, such as the title “Minister of Foreign Affairs” (ibid.). Both impersonalisation as well as functionalization are important tools for analysis in polarization because they draw attention to whose opinion or ideology is attributed with authority. Continuous use of, for instance, functional honorifics could, I argue, have significant effects in increasing the salience of a particular frame, especially if used repeatedly.

### 2.2.2. Key concepts regarding the theory of polarization

In this thesis, polarization is referred to as a phenomenon where groups of people cluster around a certain opinion and/or ideology. To summarize, Esteban and Ray, among other researchers, refer to polarization as a situation where the population of individuals are grouped into different clusters according to “some vector of characteristics” (Esteban and Ray 1994, 819). In this case, each cluster entails attributes that are homogenous within the cluster while maintaining a difference with other clusters (ibid.) “In this case”, say Esteban and Ray, “we can say the society is *polarized*.” (ibid.)

According to Esteban and Ray, in any society there is an “amalgamation of *groups*”, where individuals of the same group can seem similar to each other and individuals from different groups dissimilar, all relative to “some given set of *attributes* or *characteristics*” (Esteban and Ray 1994, 824). It follows that polarization is a trait that can be used to describe the level to which certain attributes or characteristics are close to or far from each other, relating thus to the distribution of attributes (ibid.). The concept of an attribute or set of attributes is highly relevant in this thesis. It provides a goal as to what kind of questions to ask from the data using the tools of media framing and CDA, and narrows down polarization from a mere abstract concept to the realm of concrete wordings, connotations and other notions that can be understood as “attributes” in a news piece.

Finally, as an additional tool to identify polarizing routines, this thesis selectively makes use of what Mutz describes as “bracketing”, which refers to the media’s tendency to “define the range of legitimate opinions” by “defining the boundaries of acceptable controversy” (Mutz 2006, 239). Mutz points out how the media’s tendency to rely on official sources, such as politicians, can lead to even extreme opinions being covered by the press. This process acts as providing legitimacy to certain opinions, simply by covering them regularly.

In sum, this thesis utilizes a mix of concepts from media framing and CDA and links them together with the framework and concepts offered by polarization theories. By merging these concepts in the same study, this thesis provides an interdisciplinary point of view to current events in Finland, contributing to a holistic point of view of the case.

### 3. Research questions

This research has one main research question and two sub research questions. The main question is:

- 1) What is the role of Finnish journalism in polarization regarding issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and the resulting multiculturalism debate?

Sub-questions:

- 1) What is the connection between polarization of opinions and media framing?
- 2) How have the chosen case examples\* functioned in polarizing the discussion about issues related to asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism in Finland?

\*Case examples are: Yle A2-ilta debate, Yle articles.

In addition, my research will broadly characterize the situation in Finland regarding conflict escalation and the outcomes of polarization.

### 4. Research methods

This research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of quantitative methods was necessary as a preliminary method of analysis to perform a valid qualitative analysis. The quantitative methods feature selecting key events from 2015–2016 regarding the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate, and finding sample articles to be analysed qualitatively. I have translated the needed points from the data from Finnish to English myself for the purposes of this thesis, and I have indicated if the English translation differs in grammatical meaning from the Finnish one. In most relevant cases, such as in referring to headlines, I have included the original Finnish wording in the text.

## 4.1. Quantitative methods

This thesis examines Yle web news articles concerning polarization and asylum seeker related issues between June 2015 and December 2016 as well as one tv-broadcast related to the topic. The reason I chose Yle from the spectrum of Finnish media for research is multifaceted. Firstly, according to Yle itself, about 90 percent of Finns follow Yle's contents in tv, radio or the internet every week (Yle 2015). Yle's reach is therefore extremely wide in scope, and Yle covers news not only for the Finnish-speaking majority, but also to language minorities, such as the Finnish-Swedish, Russians, the Sami and the deaf. Secondly, Yle is government funded (Yle 2016) and as such aims to secure impartiality (Yle 2015). I find it therefore a more interesting object of analysis in this case than commercially tied news sources or political newspapers. Thirdly, it is Yle who hosted the widely publicized A2-ilta broadcast where, on a rare instance, journalists made a choice of addressing the polarization in society and invited members of both alleged opinion groups into a studio to discuss the matter.

### *Choosing the articles*

The articles I chose for analysis are from between July 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. They range from the date of MP Olli Immonen's Facebook status update and the following news coverage, to the end of the year when a neo-Nazi killed a bystander in a protest in Helsinki and the peak of the news coverage concerning the incident. Between these dates, I have selected five key events regarding polarization in Finland and its coverage by Yle. Based on my overall view of the polarization debate and the news between the allotted time range, I have selected the following key events for analysis (timeline in the Appendix, fig 4):

1. July 2015: MP Olli Immonen publishes a Facebook status, saying he's "dreaming of a strong, brave nation that will defeat this nightmare called multiculturalism", calling it an ugly bubble "that our enemies live in" which will soon burst. The post was widely covered in the media, including over a hundred articles in Yle. The aftermath of this post was substantial, ranging from Immonen's temporary suspension from The Finns Party to media demanding chairman of the Finns Party Timo Soini and other MPs to take a stand on the case. Eventually 15 000 people protested in Helsinki alone for

multiculturalism and tolerance in an event labelled “Meillä on unelma”, “We have a dream”, because of Immonen’s words.

2. September 2015: Monthly supplement to *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Nyt-liite*, closes their comment sections for two weeks, a period which has since extended to the present time. Reasons for this are cited as overreactions and poor quality of conversation and increased hate speech (Toivonen in Yle news, 2015). Soon, MTV3 decides to close their comment sections regarding news concerning asylum seekers and refugees. Editor-in-chief Merja Ylä-Anttila says to Yle news that the refugee crisis has resulted in both hate speech and over-frenzied conversation (ibid.). Later, also Verkkouutiset internet news service, a tribune for the National Coalition Party (Verkkouutiset website), follows suite, citing immigration related news comments as the source of the decision (Toivonen in Yle news.) *Iltalehti* says they will follow their current line of not opening commenting in news regarding immigration topics (ibid).
3. From July 2015 onwards: So called street patrol groups start appearing in the streets. Amongst them are Vastarintaliike, a Finnish branch of a Nordic neo-Nazi group, and a newcomer, a group who calls themselves Soldiers of Odin. Their agenda is allegedly to keep the streets safe, especially for women, but numerous news articles reveal their extensively racist roots. (see e.g. Rigatelli in Yle news, 2016). Other kinds of street patrols start emerging too, including ones who describe themselves as groups of parents who want to keep an eye on the neighbourhood.
4. March 2016: The ongoing discussion and tension about asylum seekers reaches a point where Yle decided to host a broadcast labelled “Insecurity evening”, and invites members of what they conceptualise as both sides of the extremes to discuss whether Finland feels less safe because of asylum seekers and street patrols or not (Yle A2-ilta Twitter update from March 2016, see Appendix, fig. 3). The show sparks wide debates already before it was aired, especially for inviting a member of the Finnish Defence League into the studio. Finnish Defence League describes themselves as “NON-racist, non-violent advocacy group, politically and religiously independent” and “Against Islamic extremism” (FDL webpages, no date of publishing). *Helsingin Sanomat* describes the group as “fanatically nationalist” (Paavilainen and Dahlblom, 2016).

Numerous prominent politicians, amongst them people of colour, cancelled their attendance because of the presence of FDL (ibid.).

5. September to December 2016: A passer-by, later identified as a young man named Jimi Karttunen, spits in front of a group of neo-Nazis (Suomen Vastarintaliike –group) marching in Helsinki. One neo-Nazi kicks Karttunen in the chest. Karttunen dies in the hospital a week later. Trial ensued as to whether the kick was fatal or not.

The events were chosen from a pool of news articles searched from Yle's own internet database. The choices of articles are based on keywords that I tried and found successful in uncovering the chosen news events.

The search ([haku.yle.fi](http://haku.yle.fi)) utilizes filters in the search system, such as language and type of data (news articles, tv-shows, podcasts etc.) In all cases, I used the filters of "Finnish language" and "news". In addition, I used the filter "domestic news" in all other searches apart from the first case of Olli Immonen and the last case of the death of Jimi Karttunen. This is because in these searches, I found that not all articles of importance would have been included in the search with the additional filter of "domestic news". This might be due to how Yle reporters tag their articles when writing them, or for other insufficiencies in the search system. In any case, I found ample amount of news data with this system to analyse each key event.

In the case of searching for news concerning the Immonen-case, street patrols and the death of Jimi Karttunen, I added a daterange to the search to limit the amount of results. In the first two cases mentioned the date range is from the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 (Immonen's Facebook post date) to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2016 (end of the time range of this thesis), and in Jimi Karttunen's case I used the date range of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016. The reason for the different date range in the latter case is that I used search words that were rather general to find all articles on the case, and therefore had to narrow down the date range to enable more accurate results for this particular event. Since Karttunen was first kicked in the chest in a demonstration on September 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 (see e.g. Järvinen in Suomen Kuvalehti, 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2016), the date range in this case is more than enough to uncover articles related to the event. In the remaining key events concerning the shutting down of comment sections and A2-ilta show, I deemed a date range filter unnecessary, since the events were very short-spanned and were easy to search through manually from the data base.

The clearest key event is the case of Olli Immonen's status update on Facebook. This event and its aftermath are what appears to have sparked the debate about multiculturalism and its



adversaries, and the following chain of reactions in the Finnish society appears to have reified two polarized groups of opinion, one for multiculturalism, one against it. This does not necessarily mean that Immonen's Facebook status is the direct link that caused the entire discussion on polarization. However, the Facebook status of Immonen appears to have worked as an igniter, a catalyst for a chain reaction that could have happened anyway and was just waiting for a proper instigator to manifest itself. It is clear based on reading Yle news in a linear manner since the Facebook-case that the following mass demonstrations in Helsinki and other notable cities were a direct result of Immonen's Facebook status. This is also apparent from the organisers themselves, who cited Immonen's status as a key instigator for organising such events (e.g. Leppävuori in Yle news 2015, Yle Uutiset in Yle news 2015, Väisänen in Yle news 2015). The fact that this event sparked an abundance of news articles makes it a fruitful event to analyse regarding the role of journalism in polarization.

The next key event, the closing of comment sections in notable online media, was chosen due to its significance for both freedom of speech as well as to the debate about the existence and scope of polarization. Based on the few news articles I found from Yle concerning this event, the cited reasons for either closing the comment sections entirely or for a time limit have been due to an increase in hate speech, poor quality of dialogue and the immigration discussion running out of hands (Toivonen in Yle news, 2015). This event is a clear-cut example of the existence of polarized dialogue, even if the sides of the polarization are not obviously manifested in these articles.

The third key event is the A2-ilta broadcast, which merits as a key event since it is an obvious manifestation of journalists attempting to address the elusive case of polarization of opinions regarding asylum seeker and multiculturalism related issues.

The fourth key event is the appearance of so called street patrol groups in the streets of various cities in Finland. The appearance of so many kinds of street patrol groups appears to, judging by the tone of the news articles, be a new phenomenon in Finnish society. As such, it deserved closer scrutiny. It transpired that some of the groups in question – Soldiers of Odin and Vastarintaliike, most notably – have a distinct anti-immigrant agenda. Members of Vastarintaliike are, in their own words, “national socialists” whose aim is to “protect the Finnish identity” (Vastarintaliike, accessed February 9<sup>th</sup> 2017). Soldiers of Odin have been cited as fighting for “white Finland” (Ahjopalo in Yle news, 2016). The appearance of anti-immigrant street patrols so close after Immonen's Facebook-status case and in the same year of the increase in the amount of asylum seekers is a telling example of polarization. Due to the wide and varied news coverage of the event, it gives ample analysis as to the role of journalism in polarization.

The fifth and final key event is the death of Jimi Karttunen, a passer-by in a neo-Nazi demonstration of Vastarintaliike-group in Asema-aukio, Helsinki. The case sparked up a string of news about the surveillance of radical groups as well as fighting organised racism. It also brought into discussion the use of the word “extreme” again in discussing “extreme groups” in Finland. Politicians began discussing banning extreme groups, and some politicians, including the Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, discussed the possible connections of extreme groups and members of parliamentary groups as reprehensible (see Valtonen in Yle news, 2016). As such, the Asema-aukio incident is a key event in the reifying of extreme groups in Finland and brings into light how journalists cover the political debate around the subject.

The total number of articles from these key events is 252 plus one tv-broadcast. The first event (Immonen-case) featured 110 articles, the second event (closing of comment sections) two articles, the third event (A2-ilta) eight articles plus the broadcast, the fourth event (street patrols) 72 articles and the fifth event (Asema-aukio death case) 60 articles. Because the amount of news articles is vast and varies largely from one event to the other, I have selected samples from the pool of articles under two parameters: the most shared in social media (Facebook) and the most read ones per each event. In light of the theories of frame salience (see Entman 1993), I deem the most read and shared articles are the ones that matter the most, since they reach the most people and it is their frame of reference that is likely to be a part of the social discussion of the readers, ranging from coffee table discussions to shaping the way a case is framed by the public.

The selection of the most read articles is based on help from Yle's data specialist Sami Mattila who accessed the readership numbers per article. The selection of the most shared articles is based on the numbers I have extracted from feeding the bulk of articles per each event into a service called Shared Count ([sharedcount.com](http://sharedcount.com)). Shared Count is a service that was recommended to me from Yle, as it finds the number of times an article is shared on each major social media network by querying it “directly from the services” (Shared Count, accessed March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017).

There are naturally limitations in this kind of data collection. I have chosen key events based on what I personally deemed as the five most important events of a selected time range regarding polarization. Even though I have discussed this selection with some outsiders who agreed that the choice of events was fair, some other researcher might have come to a different conclusion. However, I find reliability in the random selection of articles: the most shared and the most read articles are not for me to decide, but are rather based on the behaviour of the audience. This gives the research validity in the sense that I utilize the behaviour of the readers in this regard, even though I chose the key events myself.

Another limitation in this data collection is that Yle's own search system with filters is not the most accurate system of collecting articles. I do not know if the search system produces different results if, say, the system should be updated and might use a different logic to find articles from the database. Because, of this, I have made an effort to see that the results from my article searches are as accurate as needed by doing a number of different test searches, by reading the bulks of articles so that as few articles as possible would go amiss per event, and by trying different filters in the system to assure that the search words and filters were accurate enough.

Finally, a clear limitation is that I cannot generalize the results of this analysis to be representative of all Finnish journalism. As I am researching Yle, I can only make deductions about the role of Yle concerning polarization, and it would be hubristic to assume my research provides a definite answer that would concern all Finnish media, as the media landscape in Finland is diverse. There might be other newspapers, magazines or online journals that have had a different role in polarization than Yle. However, I feel I can make some cautious generalizations about the role of Finnish media in polarization. This I feel I can safely do because Yle has such a large readership (see chapter 2.1.) and since they have a large presence in television as well as the internet news (I have omitted radio from this research). Of course, in doing these sorts of generalizations I have exercised the utmost care to not overstep the limitations of this research and to make sure my deductions are well grounded.

## **4.2. Qualitative methods**

This thesis is a qualitative study that proceeds as a case-by-case analysis and uses Yle news articles and one tv-broadcast as data. My methodology employs concepts from media frame analysis and critical discourse analysis, and its framework is rooted in polarization theories.

After using the quantitative methods discussed before to select and arrange a score of articles for this research, I have read and studied the most read and shared articles per each "event". In some cases, the same article is the most read as well as the most shared one. "An event" refers here to the key events discussed in the Quantitative methods-chapter. I decided to take into analysis events that appeared to have emerged during the timespan of this thesis. This made analysis and article selection simpler, and it also allowed me to analyse events that were unique between 2015–2016. This selection of events gives this thesis a fresh angle. Instead of analysing how journalists depict, say, asylum seekers – which has been widely covered in many researches before (see e.g. Eide and Nikunen 2011; Hayes 2008; Lecheler, Bos and Vliegthart 2015), this thesis focuses in events that

are topical and appear to be associated with asylum seekers, multiculturalism and polarizing topics between 2015–2016. This thesis exposes the way journalists treat polarizing events and sheds light into the power of journalistic routines to potentially fuel a division of opinion.

The events are analysed in a chronological order, although as with any societal phenomena, the aftermath of each event might overlap with the other. As to the analysis of articles, I have generally started the analysis of the key events with analysing the headline and the lead of the most read and most shared article(s) using Pan and Kosicki's framework and concepts of syntactical structures, thematic structures and rhetoric structures and, to some extent, lexical choices (Pan and Kosicki 1993). Since Pan and Kosicki have identified the headline as the most, and lead as the second most "powerful framing device of the syntactical structure", I have deemed those parts of the article as ideal to start with. From this analysis, I have determined the general frame of the article, the central message it displays based on the choice of the headline and lead, including lexical choices (Pan and Kosicki 1993). Key event 4 features a broadcast, in which case analysing articles related to the event in a detailed form is omitted.

Following this, I have analysed the rest of the article with the help of media framing and CDA concepts. I have used a mixed method where I have, case-by-case, selected the tools that appeared most accurate for each case from the pool of concepts I have discussed in chapter 2.2. I have treated each case analysis of a news event as a separate piece of data and chosen media framing and CDA tools according to what the article(s) has needed. The conceptual tools are, to name the key ones, Pan and Kosicki's (1993) findings on syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure and rhetorical structures as well as lexical choices; Van Dijk's critical news text analysis, including questions like: "Who are the (main, secondary) actors of the news story?", "How are these actors described, from which point of view?" and "Who are used as sources, and how are such sources legitimated?" (Van Dijk 1987, 19); and Machin and Mayr's devices of "persuading with abstraction", such as rhetoric and metaphors connotations, and ways to represent people, such as functionalisation and impersonalisation (Machin and Mayr 2012). These tools have helped me to decipher the potentially polarizing journalistic choices in the article and to analyse what kind of a reality the article portrays regarding division of opinion.

I have chosen to not concentrate on journalists as individuals in this thesis. This because I do not have knowledge of the practicalities concerning the writing of the news articles, and thus do not know to what extent each journalist has made individual choices of words, headlines and other such items in the articles. It is not uncommon that several people are involved in editing an article in the process of writing a news piece, and thus I do not want to treat the articles as choices by individual

journalists, but rather focus on Yle in general as a media who makes choices and decisions and thus represents reality as a journalistic entity.

After analysing the most shared and read article(s) with the aforementioned tools, I have moved on to Esteban and Ray's concepts concerning polarization as well as Collins's observations on the same topic. When, for example, Collins's notions on polarization are discussed, the reader should bear in mind that Collins depicts polarization as one milestone in a loop of an escalating conflict (Collins 2012, 4, figure 3) and sees polarization as a "source of many aspects of conflict". Hence, polarization in this thesis is automatically connected to the wider framework of conflict escalation (see Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 13). Separate theories of escalation of conflicts outside polarization theories are thus not present in this thesis. However, the conclusions will make use of Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall's (2011) ideas concerning conflict escalation.

Esteban and Ray (1994) have focused on the measurement of polarization, and it is their observations I build upon in using their notion of "attributes" being a key part in determining the grouping of individuals into certain clusters according to their characteristics. They state that a society is polarized when individuals can be grouped "according to some vector of characteristics into "clusters," such that each cluster is very 'similar' in terms of the attributes of its members, but different clusters have members with very 'dissimilar' attribute" (Esteban and Ray 1994, 819). To reify the polarization spectrum to which I am comparing different articles with, I use Esteban and Ray's ideas about what the distribution of a given attribute looks like in a polarized situation. According to Esteban and Ray, in any society there is an "amalgamation groups", where individuals of the same group can seem similar to each other and individuals from different groups dissimilar, all relative to "some given set of attributes or characteristics" (Esteban and Ray 1994, 824). It follows, then, that polarization is a trait that can be used to describe the level to which certain attributes or characteristics are close to or far from each other. (ibid.). Polarization of the distribution of attributes "must exhibit" the basic features of (1) a "high degree of homogeneity" within the group, (2) a "high degree of heterogeneity across groups" and (3) "a small number of significantly sized groups" (ibid.) As this thesis is mainly concerned over polarization of opinion and the measurement of homogeneity or heterogeneity in groups is not possible to measure, I have resorted to using the notion of an attribute as a guiding line for operationalizing polarization. In this thesis, I have operationalised Esteban and Ray's notions of polarization as a distribution of a given attitude as a spectrum of opinion. The attribute or characteristic around which the spectrum of polarized opinions forms is considered separately in each event and batch of articles. In one case, the attribute might be "Immonen's ideology", in another the opinion "for" or "against street patrols", for instance.

Using this notion, I have examined the rest of the articles per each event (with the exemption of A2-ilta) and sought to identify whether there are attributes that would contain opposite poles. I have thus sought to find whether the coverage of an event itself displays frames that promote polarization through manifesting a spectrum of attributes far from each other. To discover dominant frames and possible polarization poles, I have listed all the articles per each event based on their headline and identified whether there are categories of frames that emerge from them. In the case of the Facebook-post by Olli Immonen and the emergence of street patrols (key events 1 and 2), there are clear, dominant frames that emerge from the pool of articles, in which case I have sorted the articles according to which frame they belong to. In the cases of closing of comment sections (key event 3) and the death of Jimi Karttunen (key event 5), which feature less the kind of juxtaposition as key events 1 and 2, I have resorted to use the tools of media framing and CDA to examine how they have contributed to the existing debate on polarization, instead of finding the opposing poles from the event itself.

In every step of the way, I have made use of Jullian's observations about the use of quotations as a way for the journalist to distance themselves from the responsibility of what is being said (Jullian 2011, 769, citing Scollon 1998) as well as the fact that using quotations is an active form of journalistic decision-making and use of control (ibid). Therefore, I have paid attention to the abundant use of quotations in the articles and brought into limelight the fact that even in cases of very little text body from the journalist, the use of quotations does not abstain the journalist from responsibility.

For the analysis of A2-ilta broadcast (key event 4), I have selected tools from the same theories and toolkits than in analysing the articles. This is because critical discourse analysis has been used in several researches involving television programs (see Ramanathan and Tan 2015; Bilal et al. 2012), and thus has been proven a flexible method for both text as well as televised content analysis. A more important reason for using the same tools for text as well as television is that this thesis utilizes mainly the transcription of the hosts' word choices in A2-ilta instead of focusing on audio-visual elements. This is largely due to practical reasons: the scope of this thesis does not allow for the full analysis of an hour and a half of televised debate in addition to analysing numerous text articles. Thus, this thesis is content with analysing the word choices of the hosts to reveal the frames and ideologies behind those choices.

For A2-ilta, I have selected Van Dijk's CDA approach as the dominant method of analysis. His ideas of an ideology promoting an "us vs. them" setting (see Van Dijk 1995b, 22; Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 59) is suitable for analysing this event because of the nature of the broadcast: a studio

setting with guests from various backgrounds with some opposing, some agreeing opinions. In this key event, my focus is in the journalistic choices (such as the choice of guests) and the words used by the hosts of the program in their leads. I have used CDA and media frame analysis to identify the dominant frames set by the hosts and analysed the impact of journalistic choices with the framework of polarization theories and Van Dijk's notions on juxtaposition. For example, by reiterating asylum seekers as "us" and "them", the media, in this case this television broadcast, comes to reinforce an ideology where asylum seekers are some form of "other", not part of "us" and in need of integration" (see Van Dijk 1995b, 22). As conceptual help, I have also used Van Dijk's observations on micro- and macro levels of interaction (see Van Dijk 2001, 354), and analysed as to how the show might legitimize polarizing discourse by displaying it on a micro level – a studio discussion – thus helping to channel it to a macro level, into public discussion.

I have included Entman's four functions of a frame to my conceptual toolkit, particularly for the purposes of analysing the statements of the hosts of A2-ilta. These four frame functions, described in chapter 2.2.1., serve as a method to expose how the leads of hosts can include frames, even subtle ones. These frame functions also help to identify whether there is a thematic structure or a pre-decided frame behind the discourse, up kept by the hosts. As additional help for analysing the role of the hosts in A2-ilta, I have transcribed their lines to observe more carefully about what was said during the broadcast. This means that my analysis of A2-ilta had to exclude, for the sake of the brevity of this thesis, the analysis of visual cues, such as tone or facial expressions. Nevertheless, I believe analysing the word choices of the hosts is fruitful in the context of this thesis and a sufficient method of analysis for the purposes of my research objectives.

Finally, I have used Randall Collins' notes on polarization in the context of his theory of conflict escalation. His idea of the perception of atrocities performed by the other is what produces polarization, instead of blatant violence. (Collins 2012, 4). This notion helped me to analyse how the tendency of the media to use people's perceptions of things as a corner stone for a story can have a devastating effect.

### **4.3. Ethics**

This thesis poses some ethic challenges which I have attempted to resolve by being transparent in my choices and by explaining the thesis process as honestly as possible.

One ethical challenge is that in the analysis, this thesis looks for polarization of all kinds, and therefore takes the risk of finding juxtapositions that fall in different ends of a moral spectrum. For example, finding a polarization of opinion about for or against a politician's actions or in opinions concerning street patrols might seem like unfair comparisons, especially if any side is connected to morally questionable values, such as racism. However, to my understanding, the question of polarization refers to polar opposites of opinion *with respect to each other*. They do not need to be moral polar opposites, or even on the complete opposites of same scale (for example, far left-wing vs. far right-wing). There is nothing in the research literature that I have found that would imply that the polar opposite always needs a mathematically equal opposite pole. If we leave morally questionable opinions to the side, this research's breakdown of polarization boils down to opposing opinions regarding different issues, and this thesis takes no moral stand concerning the way media has chosen to portray polarization of different kinds. In addition, as I tend to favour a more liberal point of view in matters concerning immigration myself, I have involved a level of transparency in my arguments to foster proper self-criticism. In my conclusions, I have taken space to make an honest tallying of the analysis and results, and involved careful reflection to ensure a more balanced outcome.

Another ethical point is that I have been a journalist for Yle myself and am currently working for them (although for a moment while writing this thesis I was unemployed). Therefore, I have paid attention not to think of Yle or the media as an employee who I would have to protect from possible criticism. Furthermore, I have distanced myself from the field of journalism to not think of myself as included in the media, in the sense of "what do *we as journalists* do". To ensure this, I have asked my thesis supervisor to read excerpts from this thesis while writing it.

Another potential ethical challenge is to have enough critical distance to not jump into conclusions, since issues such as polarization might look different from the viewpoint of an "insider" of the media or a researcher. To avoid making inaccurate conclusions, I have dedicated myself to justifying all claims about media's impact and polarization through research literature and/or examples. Related to this, one challenge is to avoid making policy recommendations and avoiding normativity in my writing style. To ensure that this thesis stays on an academic level, I refrained from making recommendations in this research and instead wrote a separate, opinionated blog post for the University of Tampere about the issues touched upon in this thesis.

Finally, I have made an effort to not make conclusions based on assumptions. For example, the question of (two) polar opposites of opinion is something that has been discussed a lot in the media and in coffee table discussions, but it is difficult to trace back how this phrase has entered the conversation in the first place. I will need to pay attention to base everything on sources, either



from theories or the media, to make sure that I have not merely assumed a situation exists simply because it has been discussed in the public.

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. Key event no.1: The case of MP Olli Immonen's Facebook update

#### 5.1.1. *Background*

On July 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, Member of Parliament of the Finns Party Olli Immonen published a Facebook-post calling for the defeat of “this nightmare called multiculturalism” (Immonen's Facebook-post, 2015) (see Appendix, fig. 1). He referred to multiculturalism as an “ugly bubble that our enemies live in”, and called for a “fight until the end for our homeland and one true Finnish nation”. This short but noteworthy statement did not go unnoticed – rather soon the media picked up on it, and it became a widely-discussed issue that caused not only national uproar, but was also noted abroad (MTV news, 2015).

The results of the Facebook update on a national level were extensive. Numerous Members of Parliament took a stand concerning Immonen's supposed ideology, including the prime minister (see e.g. Jaakkola in Yle news, 2015; de Fresnes in Yle news, 2015). Immonen's possible connections with ultra-right wing groups and neo-Nazis were publicised (Yle news 2015) and his statement was said to “divide the Finns party” (Valtonen in Yle news, 2015). Perhaps the peak of criticism against Immonen was reached when a string of demonstrations labelled “We Have a Dream” (“Meillä on unelma”) were held in numerous cities in Finland, most notably in Helsinki, where about 15 000 people demonstrated “for multiculturalism” and as a result of Immonen's Facebook-post (Yle news, 2015). Finally, Immonen decided to resign temporarily from the Finns Party parliamentary group (Kiviranta in Yle news, 2015) because of the sensation.

The number of articles I collected of this event is 110. The articles span from interviewing politicians about Immonen's Facebook post to articles about the mass demonstrations' spinoff stories. A notable portion of the articles is focused on interviewing different politicians about their opinions concerning Immonen's Facebook post. A lot of these politicians are from the Finns party all over Finland, but politicians from other parties were also interviewed. On a general level, Yle reporters seem to have contacted many of Finns Party chairmen and –women from various

Finnish counties about the case. This is probably because each local branch of Yle works on their own issues of the day (according to my own experience as a journalist for Yle), and has most likely wanted to ask their local Finns Party leader for an opinion about the matter.

It is noteworthy that in one article, the co-founder and then-leader of the Finns Party, Foreign Minister Timo Soini said he did not care how many in his party think like Immonen (Valtonen in Yle news, 2015). According to Soini, there has been efforts to disintegrate the Finns Party for the last 20 years, and he therefore pays no attention to such discussion. This rhetoric of how the party has been tried to be dismantled by some unknown group – perhaps by the media – is again repeated in another article (Seppälä in Yle news, 2015).

After about two weeks since Immonen's Facebook post, the Finns Party blamed the media, namely Yle, for continuing systematic discrediting of the party in their news articles, claiming that the media are an institution upholding hate speech and have an agenda to lever the Finns Party out of the government. Euro Parliamentarian and Finns Party member Jussi Halla-aho (elected as the new chairman of the party since June 2017) went on to say that those reporters who try to dictate which opinions can be represented in the government are enemies of democracy (Seppälä in Yle news, 2015; Naalisvaara in Yle news, 2015). One representative of the party, "workman" Putkonen (title given by the Finns Party) strongly condemned how the media handled the case, and said the Finns Party would hire a lawyer to investigate the claims made by the media (Dahl in Yle news, 2015). This on its part lead one politician to criticize Putkonen for trying to threaten the media (Ruokangas in Yle news, 2015). On August 26 2015, Putkonen released a list of people by name who, according to him, kept "backbiting" the Finns Party. Among the people on the list were the editor-in-chief of Yle, Atte Jääskeläinen. (Yle news, 2015; Hernesaho in *Ilta-Sanomat*, 2015).

In sum, the Facebook-post by Immonen reached multiple levels of juxtaposition and public division of opinions, on both a political level as well as on the level of citizen activity. Further analysis will reveal more of these layers and their implications on polarization.

### *5.1.2. Analysing the most read and the most shared articles*

The coverage by Yle in the Immonen case has been extensive. Between July 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, the post's publishing day, and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016, there are a 110 news articles that mention Immonen and his Facebook-post in one way or another. These articles range from asking different politicians of their opinion about Immonen's ideas and covering the marches for solidarity that emerged because of his Facebook-post, to articles merely mentioning the Facebook-issue in one sentence. This means that

Immonen's name and ideas have been linked to different kinds of headlines, frames or thematic 110 times, leaving plenty of room for interpretation for the readers. Of course, this refers to Yle's articles only: there are plenty of other news sources, discussions, and social media available, where different frames might be salient. Nevertheless, Yle's coverage of the case is large enough to merit closer inspection.

The most read article in the case of Olli Immonen's Facebook-post is also the most shared one. It is a human-interest story of a train conductor who, on his last day of work, decided to give "an emotional speech" through the train's announcement system regarding racism and opposing its root causes (Marttinen 2015, Yle news). The conductor was cited as wanting to use this opportunity to "take a stand in the conversation about multiculturalism in our country". Olli Immonen's Facebook-post is mentioned in the article as the starting point of the immigration discussion, according to the conductor of the train. This conversation over immigration had initiated him to write down some of his own thoughts, and to make a speech as his final announcement on board the train. The article itself is not long, only 145 words, and it is a reference story of an interview done by the morning radio hosts of Yle. The article includes a two-minute audio track of the morning show clip, containing a bit of the speech given by the train conductor. The article had over 93 000 page views by February 2017, according to the Yle sources used for this research. By April 18<sup>th</sup>, when I accessed the sharing rates, it had 9990 shares on Facebook (according to the Shared Count.com-statistics).

Of course, the main question is: what can be analysed about the role of the media regarding polarization from this article? Here Pan and Kosicki's categories of framing devices come to use. Using syntactical structures, thematic structures and rhetorical structures, this analysis will reveal those parts of the article that can shed light into its implications to polarization.

The first notable issue about the article is its heading: "A train conductor opened up on his last day of work: 'Racism springs from false information'" ("Konduktööri avautui viimeisenä työpäivänään: 'Rasismi kumpuaa väärästä tiedosta'"). The heading is a part of a news story's syntactical structure and its "most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds" (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). The headline shows two things: one, the story is a human-interest story of an individual who works in a public, government owned office and therefore catches our interest; and two, he takes a public stand against racism, i.e., he is probably an anti-racist or otherwise a "tolerant" or a liberal person. As a lexical choice, the wording "opened up" is an interesting one. Following Pan and Kosicki's idea of "a designator" word (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 62), by using the term "to open up", the journalist places the words of the conductor into the same realm

as “confessing” or generally “spilling the beans” on something he has wanted to say for a long time. This gives the article the feeling that what the conductor is saying has certain weight: he is not merely saying something, he is *opening up* about something. Of course, to “open up” is also a metaphor, which is a device for persuading the reader through abstraction (Machin and Mayr 2012, 163). Additionally, using the word “conductor” instead of saying the name of the conductor in the headline is a representational strategy of impersonalisation (Machin and Mayr 2012, 79), which can be interpreted to give yet more weight to the statement. A train conductor is, I argue, a very relatable person, perhaps responding to our images of a very average, working person whose opinion we are interested to hear.

To choose the conductor’s words “Racism springs from false information” into the headline gives a great deal of emphasis to the story, as the words used by the conductor imply a causal statement. As Entman puts it, framing is selecting aspects of “a perceived reality” and increasing their salience “*in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described.” (Entman 1993, 52). Entman’s mention of a causal interpretation is thus easily recognisable in the headline’s quotation. As quotations are a way for the writer to use control over the text, (Jullian 2011, 769, citing Scollon 1998), I suggest that together with the lexical choices and the use of the quotation, this article depicts reality in two ways. One, it suggests that even ordinary working citizens (using the lexical choice of a conductor) are taking it as their mission to speak their mind (indicated by the choice of using the words “to open up”), and two, it implies, using a quotation, that racism indeed springs from false kind of information.

The lead of the article briefly describes how the train conductor surprised the passengers in his last day of work with this announcement. According to Pan and Kosicki, a good lead will provide a newsworthy angle to the story as well as suggest “a particular perspective to view the event reported” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59–60). I find a “particular perspective” in this lead in its last line that states: “The conductor gave a long speech for tolerance and multiculturalism through the train’s PA system.” (“Konduktööri piti junan kuulutusjärjestelmän kautta pitkän puheen suvaitsevaisuuden ja monikulttuurisuuden puolesta”). This last sentence suggests an interpretation of the conductor’s message as being one *for* multiculturalism and tolerance, both of which are concepts that are not mentioned in the conductor’s own words in either the quotations in the text or in the audio clip that is embedded in the article. I deduct that the reporter has interpreted the conductor’s stand based on his statements concerning racism. However, the choice to use the wording of taking a stand “for” something is a powerful suggestion by the journalist, and a form of exercising journalistic power over the source: the journalist has, by using quotations in the headline, delegated the responsibility about

the message to the train conductor (see Jullian 2011, 769, referring to Scollon 1998), but is also using this distance from what is said to make assumptions over the meaning of the conductor's words.

Following Pan and Kosicki's reasoning about designator words and signifiers, I argue that the suggested frame in the Yle article in question is that the conductor is taking a stand for multiculturalism and tolerance, which conceptually immediately labels him into a group – a group of those who support the same values. The signified word in the lead is “conductor” and the designator words are “tolerance and multiculturalism”. The resulting frame connects this story in many ways to the debate about polar opposites of opinion regarding multiculturalism. As the general frame of this event (Immonen's Facebook-status and its aftermath) implies, polarization discussion in Finland appears to revolve around two conceptually different groups, at least in the context of this event. The other group shows here as those who are taking a stand for multiculturalism and tolerance, as demonstrated by the marches for these values in the aftermath of the Immonen-case. The other group, then, shows as those against multiculturalism, like Immonen and those supporting his ideology. Further analysis on these more general frames will follow later in this chapter.

The latter paragraphs of the story further instil grouping opinions into categories. As the conductor is cited as saying that the immigrant discussion of “the recent days started from Olli Immonen's writing”, he can be seen as taking a stand against what Immonen represents. His words of fighting against unemployment, loneliness and false information, “if there are things against which we need to fight for”, can be taken as a direct reference to Olli Immonen's call for fighting for “our homeland” and “one true Finnish nation”. Even though Immonen's name is just mentioned in the article, almost in passing, it is in the context of assertion by the interviewee: the train conductor says that it is Immonen's Facebook-post that “started” the immigration conversation. By choosing these quotations to the story, the article is suggesting a causality between events, a quality Entman finds typical in a frame (Entman 1993, 52). The idea of Immonen's post as a catalyst of events is thus subtly selected to represent an aspect of reality (ibid.).

It is noteworthy that most of the article is made up of citations from the interviewee or a reference of his words otherwise. The story contains very little of the reporter's own body text. This means that the ideology of the interviewee is most likely to be very present in the article, as his citations are what carry on the storyline. But, as it is the reporter who chooses the citations and who either questions the interviewee's story or writes it down as such, it becomes the reporter's choice to promote certain frames over others through this news convention. Or, as Jullian notes, the reporter

retains their control of the text by delegating “the responsibility for what is said” to the source (Jullian 2011, 769, referring to Scollon 1998).

Thus, the dominant frame of this article is that racism is such a poignant problem in Finland that even an ordinary train conductor felt the need to take a stand against it. Mentioning Immonen means that his Facebook-post has come to represent a catalyst for an immigration conversation so zealous that even the common working man has felt the need to react. Through these features of the story, the theme of the article becomes one man’s demonstration against the atmosphere of racism and anti-tolerance that started from Immonen’s writings.

Moving on from the most shared and read article to the rest of the articles collected for this event, the frame of the train conductor-article seems to amplify a similar story to that of the demonstrations for tolerance, events that were directly connected to Immonen’s Facebook-status controversy. The human-interest aspect and the idea of demonstrating, stating one’s opinion, is strong in both the coverage of the marches for tolerance as well as in the train conductor’s opinionated speech. In a way, the conductor’s speech can be interpreted as a miniature “march for tolerance”, as his opinion seems to be along the same lines as of those who flooded the streets after Immonen’s Facebook post.

Among the articles I collected to analyse Immonen’s Facebook-post case, there are nine articles that cover the marches and demonstrations for tolerance (i.e. articles that focus on covering the event, excluding articles that merely mention the marches briefly). Of those articles, seven labelled the demonstrations as taking a stand *for multiculturalism*. One labelled the demonstrations as taking a stand *against racism*, and one mentioned that present in the march were prominent figures who appealed *for multiculturalism*. As the conductor’s speech has been framed in the article’s lead as a stand *for multiculturalism* and *tolerance*, it becomes a part of the same context as the demonstrations, and the conductor becomes a part of the same group of thought. These frames indicate making moral judgments, which Entman specifies as evaluating causal agents and their effects (Entman 1993, 52). By phrasing the demonstrations as “for” X and “against” Y, the media is increasing the salience of a frame that suggests an ideology in support of multiculturalism, against racism. Some of the marches were labelled as “for multiculturalism” by the arrangers themselves, but it is still the media who chose to bring that frame into the limelight. In other words, the media is emphasising an attribute of pro-multiculturalism in these events and the marchers, creating one conceptual group with this common characteristic – thus potentially distancing this group from those who are opposing of this particular ideology (see Esteban and Ray 1994). Furthermore, one of the

articles covering the marches labelled Immonen's post as a text "opposing multiculturalism" (Yle news 2015), thus giving Immonen's text the opposing attribute in contrast with the demonstrations.

Another point concerning the multitude of articles covering this event is the use of politicians as sources and the implications it might have to the frames of the article. Looking through the batch of articles, it appears that in most cases, it is not the reporter who is making interpretations of Immonen's sayings, but rather the reporters in Yle tend to use direct citations from interviewees as descriptions of events and issues. Thus, the burden of interpretation is not with the reporter and they do not resort to use their own descriptions (see Jullian 2011), but use instead the interviewees' descriptions and explanations. In this way, the reporters are distancing themselves from revealing their opinions (Jullian 2011, 769).

Related to using quotations is the concern about letting outsider actors influence journalism. In the 110 articles concerning this event, Yle has used a wide number of politicians to comment on the matter. Scheufele discusses the matter of external sources of influence, which can be "political actors, authorities, interest groups, and other elites" (Scheufele 1999, 115, citing Gans, 1979 and Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). In this model, "news events are covered with 'journalists simply holding a mirror to them and reflecting their image to the audience'" (Scheufele 1999, 115; Gans 1979, 79). This means that frames suggested by those interest groups become incorporated in the way journalists cover a particular issue or event (Scheufele 1999, 115). Scheufele even points out that "It is rather likely that this frame-building function of mass media has a greater impact for relatively new issues (i.e., issues for which no frames have yet to be established)." (ibid.) Therefore, when journalists choose to let the politicians' statements influence way a story is framed, they are inadvertently letting the politicians' agendas and ideologies through. If the politician's ideas contain extreme ideologies or polarizing statements, the journalists risk being a part of disseminating such messages to the public. Therefore, I will next look at the different polarizing frames I found from the batch of articles regarding this event. I will first examine at the nature of the polarized frames and identify them, and finally, analyse their relation to polarization.

Looking at the 110 articles covering the Immonen-event, it appears that Yle has, through giving numerous politicians a say about the event, promoted a polarization between (1) amongst the Finns Party members, (2) the Finns Party and other political parties, and (3) Immonen and his ideological supporters and those who are against his ideology, for example protesters and other civil actors. I found these frames after noticing some repetitive patterns while reading the articles and, as a result, by sorting the articles into the categories described above. As indicated by these

categorisations, I found it noteworthy somewhere during the coverage of the Immonen-case, the debate shifted from being just a matter concerning Immonen to a matter concerning the Finns party more generally. This is evident by the juxtaposition of Finns party members and Immonen in the first category of articles, and by the way that politicians from other parties than the Finns party kept asking then party leader Timo Soini to comment the case. In other words, the question of how *the Finns party* itself feels about Immonen's ideology became the key question.

Concerning the first category, I found that about 31 percent of the articles dealt, in one way or another, the disunity about Immonen's text within the Finns party. About 17 percent dealt with other politicians or political parties being against Immonen's message and/or criticising the Finns party about the matter, and almost 34 percent dealt with Immonen's ideology vs. other facets, such as protesters for tolerance expressing their disagreement with Immonen's ideas, or articles where the media has been criticized for the way they have covered the Immonen-case. Some articles overlapped as they dealt with more than one of these categories. In addition, almost 32 percent of articles were sorted as "other", as they did not fit directly into any of the three polarizing categories. Of course, these percentages are merely directional, as a very close linguistic or other such analysis would probably reveal a multitude of aspects from each article. For the purposes of this study, I find this estimate and categorization satisfactorily accurate to analyse the general thematic of the articles.

Yle has been surprisingly proactive in their coverage of the division amongst the Finns party about Immonen's Facebook-post. There are two articles that deal specifically with which members of the Finns party are for Immonen, which ones are against him (Valtonen in Yle news 2015, Seppänen in Yle news 2015). The other of these articles contains "for" and "against" subheadings in the article, listing the opinions of different members of the Finns party from various sources and labelling them accordingly. The other article is an enquiry done by Yle where they sent an "opinion enquiry to the Finns party actives" (Seppänen in Yle news, 2015). The enquiry reached 399 actives of the party and received 177 answers (ibid.) According to this poll, 42% of those who answered accept the text, 35% did not accept the text, 6% cannot say and 17% did not want to comment (ibid.). The headline of the story is: "Yle's enquiry: Immonen's sensation text divides the Finns party into two camps" (Ylen kysely: Immosen kohukirjoitus jakaa perussuomalaiset kahteen leiriin) (ibid.). In addition to these, there is another poll, commissioned by Yle, where they asked Taloustutkimus (a market research company) to interview 2447 people concerning political party support. The interviewee, head of investigation Jari Pajunen from Taloustutkimus, said that in addition to their governmental responsibility, the sensation around Immonen has taken down the support towards the Finns party (Seppänen in Yle news, 2015). Yle was not the only media to do this kind of a



questionnaire: at least the daily paper Aamulehti also executed a similar poll during the Immonen sensation (Kalliokoski and Vainio in Aamulehti, 2015).

Going to the second polarizing category I found from the batch of articles, the second polarized juxtaposition concerns those for Immonen's ideology in the Finns party vs. politicians from other parties opposing this. This was the category with the fewest of articles, but it still entails 17% of the articles I analysed. There are articles in this category where politicians from other than the Finns party are sometimes using rather strong language about Immonen. Examining the headlines, one can see what kind of a picture they paint about Immonen.

One ex-politician from a party that preceded the Finns party compares Immonen's text to Breivik's manifesto (Hallamaa in Yle news 2015). Breivik is a mass-murderer with extreme right-wing views who murdered 77 people in Norway in 2011 (BBC.com, 2012). The prime minister is cited as saying he "cannot accept" Immonen's text (Jaakkola in Yle news, 2015), whereas one MEP from the National Coalition party asks whether they can continue collaborating with "a racist, even fascist party", referring to the Finns party (Pajunen in Yle news, 2015). The former chairman of the parliament calls Immonen's language "neo-Nazi" (de Fresnes in Yle news, 2015). One headline even says that two politicians, Halla-aho (the Finns party) and Heinäluoma (The Finnish Social Democratic Party) "clashed" over Immonen's text sensation (Sirén in Yle news, 2015). Again, these headlines indicate a strong frame of two poles of opinion, and as with the first category, Yle's tendency to repeat this frame over several articles.

The third category of articles I identified concerns with people other than politicians vs. Immonen's ideology. I included articles concerning the various demonstrations that sparked from Immonen's texts into this category, as well as other citizens, such as immigrant activists, speaking their mind about the case and criticizing Immonen. I have placed the story about the train conductor into this category, along with a few articles where the Finns party has criticized the media about its way of discussing the Immonen-event.

These articles, grouped with the numerous other articles about the division within the Finns party regarding Immonen's text, paint a strong image of polarization amongst the party. By using such lexical choices as "dividing into two camps", the articles clearly indicate the existence of two, opposite poles of opinion, which is one of the key aspects of polarization (see Esteban and Schneider, 2008). The articles also indicate that Yle reporters have had an active role in pursuing the question of whether the members of the Finns party agree with Immonen, thus making it clear that the journalists have had an active role in increasing the salience of a division-frame (see Entman,

1993). As Robinson and Mullinix have noted, “Citizens learn about elite partisan polarization, and politics more generally, through media reports” (Robinson and Mullinix 2016, 262). On a practical level, this means that even when polarization exists between parties, the media is the crucial key to convey that polarization to the public.

I put forward that Yle’s style in covering the event of Olli Immonen’s Facebook-status falls exactly into this description by conveying a high degree of frames indicating a division of three kinds, as depicted above. This is also evident from the aforementioned questionnaires and the way the articles have been framed in the headline (e.g. “Yle’s enquiry: Immonen’s sensation text divides the Finns party into two camps”; Seppänen in Yle news, 2015), as well as from the fact that the batch of articles shows that reporters in different branches of Yle have tracked down numerous politicians from the Finns party and specifically asked for their opinion on the matter (e.g. Ojanen in Yle news, 2015; Ruonaniemi in Yle news, 2015).

Esteban and Ray point out that polarization can be measured through terms of attributes (Esteban and Ray 1994, 819). That attribute can be, for instance, “an opinion index over a given political issue” (Esteban and Ray 1994, 825) – much like in the case of coverage about Immonen.

Viewing this batch of articles in the light of Esteban and Ray’s remarks, it becomes evident that Yle’s coverage has, at least in parts, directly answered the prerequisites for polarization. The articles have involved making Immonen’s ideology into an attribute. Measuring the extent to which politicians agree with his ideology or not puts them into groups who either display the attribute of agreeing with him, or do not. To use Esteban and Ray’s words, these groups now display an attribute that is similar within a group (agreeing with Immonen’s ideology), but dissimilar between groups (those agreeing vs. those not agreeing). Thus, as the division framed by Yle is a strong juxtaposition of “for” and “against” Immonen’s ideology, the opinion spectrum has now been depicted as having two poles who are rather far from each other in terms of attributes – mirroring very prerequisites of a polarized situation.

From the point of view of extreme opinions and their legitimation, I go back to Mutz’s concept of bracketing, where the media is the one who filters the “range of acceptable opinion for the public” (Mutz 2006, 239) Mutz describes that as some politicians display opinions that are on the extreme end, it follows that as journalists tend to rely on official sources, they also come to quote these extreme opinions. This is one path towards legitimizing certain opinions, “simply by covering those perspectives regularly, but not others”. (Mutz 2006, 239). It thus follows, says Mutz, that by this process, a wider range of opinions become acceptable in the eyes of the public (ibid.) As Mutz

summarizes: “If the smorgasbord of views offered in today’s media represents greater extremes than in the past, then it is perhaps not surprising that more of the public now endorses more extreme views.” (Mutz 2006, 239).

I argue that this is one of the ways Yle has fuelled polarization in the case of Immonen’s Facebook-status. By offering a constant stream of opinions for and against Immonen’s already rather extreme viewpoint; by weighing the different statements of politicians from both the Finns party as well as other politicians; by picking ostentatious statements from politicians about the case and selecting them in the headlines; and by directly juxtaposing opinions against each other in opinion polls, I argue Yle has been reifying and possibly even amplifying the polarization of opinions in the case of Immonen’s Facebook-case. Based on the amount of opinion questionnaires and interviews that Yle conducted towards the Finns party about whether members agree with Immonen, I argue that Yle in this case as a media was a part of channelling this polarization between the Finns party and other politicians as well as within the Finns party itself. By letting the politicians have plenty of space to speak, the reporters are letting through many views that, unfiltered, appear rather extreme – such as calling the Finns party “racist, even fascist” (Pajunen in Yle news, 2015) or comparing Immonen’s statements with Breivik’s manifesto (Hallamaa in Yle news 2015). In addition, by asking who agrees with Immonen, the reporters are each time magnifying Immonen’s statement by channelling support for it through the statements of politicians. By asking who disagrees, the reporters are creating an image of two groups, one of who agrees with Immonen’s views, and of one who does not.

The conclusion here is simply to state the fact that, taking a spectrum of opinions, different poles can be found from the selection Yle articles. The poles are largely based on opinions about Immonen’s ideology (for and against), which ultimately turned into a larger division between the Finns party and other politicians. The attribute shifted from being for or against Immonen’s multiculturalism-ideology to a larger debate about being for or against multiculturalism, an attribute that reified in the marches for tolerance in 2015. The most shared and read article falls into one pole – the one for multiculturalism – in this spectrum of opinions concerning this debate.

I argue also that these polarizations yield different associations. As Immonen’s Facebook-post was published in the year of the radical increase of asylum seekers arriving in Finland (Maahanmuuttovirasto 2015, 3), the question of multiculturalism may have included the question of being for or against asylum seekers as a group. This is indicated by, for example, how one of the marches for tolerance, sparked by Immonen’s Facebook-status, was mentioned as a march for multiculturalism *and* asylum seekers (Väisänen in Yle news, 2015).

In sum, the role of the media in this particular case is to do with repeating “pro” and “con” frames that were attached to the ideology of Immonen, and later continuing to channel this polarization when it started to shift into a division between the Finns party and other political ideologies. The media has also been a part of polarization when it has acted as an unfiltered channel of different political opinions that tend to fall on either side of the described spectrum.

## **5.2. Key event no.2: Emergence of street patrols**

### *5.2.1. Background*

The second key event I chose for this thesis is the news coverage concerning the upsurge of street patrols. Finland has seen the emergence of different kinds of street patrols before: for instance, before the civil war of 1918, there was a “power vacuum” created by a powerless Senate and police forces, which was filled with “volunteer civil guard units” (Haapala 2014, 46). In addition, during the civil war, both sides gathered combatants, such as the Red Guard and the White Army (Tikka 2014, 91). The appearance of street patrols for either the safety of some Finns or for targeting other groups – such as foreigners in modern day Finland (Ahjopalo in Yle news, 2016) – is therefore not, historically speaking, new.

However, the appearance of racist street patrolling is a new phenomenon, at least according to chancellor of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Päivi Nerg (Gertsch in Yle news, 2016). These street patrols are an integral part of the polarization discussion. This became apparent at least during the A2-ilta broadcast (see key event 4), when members of some street patrol groups (namely Street Hawks and the Finnish Defence League) had been asked to join the show.

I propose that it is grounded to speak of a new “emergence” of street patrols since July 2015. For instance, a search from Yle’s article archives between the first of January from 2014 until July 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, the starting point of this thesis timeline, produces only three results with the search words *katupartio* OR *katupartiot* (“street patrol OR street patrols”). The search between July 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016, on the other hand, yields 91 search results. After looking through these articles manually, I have determined 72 of them to be related to the topic of Finnish street patrols. As some of these street patrols are inherently racist by nature, which will become apparent in the analysis, they form an important example of a polarized extreme of opinion in the topic. Since there is a definite spike in the amount of news coverage of such activities, it is likely to mirror a similar upsurge of activity concerning the issue in the Finnish society during that time.

### 5.2.2. *Analysing the most read and the most shared articles*

There are altogether 72 articles about this event collected for this thesis. As with some of the previous key events, the most read and the most shared article are one and the same in this case. The article deals with secret, leaked messages from a group called Soldiers of Odin, and their connections to, for example, Nazi insignia and a magazine called MV-lehti (Rigatelli in Yle news, 2016). The article has 14 460 shares on Facebook according to Shared Count statistics, and it had received 152 530 page views by March 2017.

Soldiers of Odin is, according to different media, an anti-immigrant group founded in 2015 in Kemi, Finland (Rosendahl and Forssell in Reuters, 2016; Yle news 2016). The group themselves have denied their racist and neo-Nazi connections (Rigatelli in Yle news, 2016), but as they have also called themselves a “patriotic organization fighting for a white Finland” (Ahjopalo in Yle news, 2016), it is apparent that the group’s true nature appears to be based on racial segregation. The most read and shared article contains a multitude of messages from the Soldiers of Odin (referred to as S.O.O. from now on) lead’s closed Facebook-group. These messages and pictures include, inter alia, images of guns, racist content and anti-Muslim imagery. As background information, MV-magazine, mentioned in the headline, is an online magazine/website that has been dubbed as a lying press (e.g. Liimatainen in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2016). There have been dozens of reports of offence made of the website, and it has been suspected of incitement of the masses, spreading information that offends the laws of privacy and for publishing stories with no truth value (ibid.) The magazine has been called “racist” (Yle news, 2016), whereas the magazine’s banner calls the publication to be “100% on the side of the citizens” and “a special publication of Finnish free journalism” that the tolerant “won’t admit to be reading” (MV-lehti, accessed May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017).

Coming back to the article at hand, the first notable difference between this article and the ones that have been the most read and shared ones in the other key events is that the article is notably longer – to the point that it resembles a feature more than a news piece. It is approximately 759 words long, including numerous pictures and graphics, whereas the most read and shared article concerning the closing of comment sections is about 499 words (see key event 3), and the most shared and read piece of the Immonen-case is only 179 words, lead and headline included. A small tag “A-studio” in the upper corner of this article suggests that it is associated with the tv-programme of the same name; it is possible that this article was made to plug a tv-show with the same topic.

The other notable aspect of the article is that it contains no interviewees. The material on which the article is based on are the “secret” Facebook-messages of the lead of S.O.O. and paraphrasing previous articles and other sources on the topic. This means there is no external ideological source whose citations the journalist could use and whose ideology could potentially be the dominant frame.

The headline of this article translates as “The secret Facebook messages of the lead of Soldiers of Odin: Guns, Nazi insignia, a connection with MV-magazine” (*Soldiers of Odinin johdon salaiset Facebook-viestit: Aseita, natsitunnuksia, kytkös MV-lehteen*). Thus, the general frame of the article is clear from the very beginning in the headline: Soldiers of Odin are a group toying with Nazi ideology and pose a potential threat. The selected aspects of reality, to paraphrase Entman (1993), are in this case the inherent racist character of S.O.O., including their affiliation with neo-Nazism and potential violence. Going back to Pan and Kosicki’s four categories of framing devices (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59) – of which I use the syntactic structures, thematic structures and rhetorical structures – it is possible to dissect this dominant frame further.

The headline contains three important cues for the reader to pick up on immediately: guns, Nazi insignia and a connection with MV-magazine, all of which are directly connected with S.O.O. in the headline. One might, at first glance, deduce that all these three attributes are things to shun and evoke a negative association. While this may be true with most people, it is also true that the third attribute, the connection to MV-magazine, depends on the viewpoint: some people despise MV-magazine, and some read it avidly. By May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017, their Facebook-page had over 70 000 likes. According to a survey ordered in 2016, about 13 percent of Finns read either MV-magazine or Magneettimedia, another highly controversial media (M&M 2016). Of course, the mere fact that a certain number of Finns read a media does not make it a positive attribute: a certain number of Finns might be neo-Nazis, yet Nazism is not an attribute we view as positive. However, the proximity of these three items in the headline makes them equal attributes in relation to each other. This juxtaposition is an example of a rhetorical structure to “increase the salience of a point” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 62). Using the power of exemplars and depictions (ibid.) – by referring to things like Nazi insignia – the headline evokes strong feelings through the associations that we have about weapons, Nazism, and in the case of the majority of Finns, about MV-magazine.

The headline has established the frame of S.O.O. as a potentially dangerous, and at the very least a highly dubious organisation, connected to Nazism and violence (guns). The lead, the next important framing device after the headline (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59), cements this idea further.

The lead, to summarize, points out that the visual material acquired by Yle “reveals” that the brass of S.O.O. cherishes the Nazi-ideology and poses with guns. Their leader is connected to MV-magazine and states that S.O.O., like motorcycle clubs, is a hierarchical organization. The lead, like the headline, uses the power of rhetorical structures to evoke more associations: examples of motorcycle clubs, posing with guns, hierarchy and Nazi-ideology bring into mind an organised, racist and dangerous group who might be capable of all sorts of atrocities. The rest of the article is full of similar rhetorical devices, such as the use of visual images (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 61), showing the uncovered Facebook messages including racist messages, pictures of men in S.O.O. “uniforms” posing with guns and a picture of their clubroom, decorated with an SS wall hanging, among other things.

It is clear by now that the frame of the article is depicting S.O.O. as a highly negative group with racist, Nazi and potentially violent leanings. If this was not clear from the headline, lead and rhetoric devices, it becomes clear at the latest in the text body. The journalist clearly states that in public, S.O.O. have denied being a racist or neo-Nazi group, swearing to resort to violence only in defence. But, the material acquired by Yle “tells something else” (Rigatelli in Yle news, 2016) – meaning that the article is about to provide evidence that S.O.O. is indeed a racist and neo-Nazi organisation with capabilities to violence.

Drawing from Van Dijk’s critical news text analysis questions (Van Dijk 1987, 19), the main actors of the story are, of course, the members of S.O.O. The chairman of S.O.O., Mika Ranta, is described as a known member of Suomen Vastarintaliike, a National Socialist movement aiming for white supremacy and revolution (Rigatelli in Yle news, 2016). This piece of information connects this media event to the fifth key event (see chapter 5.5), where a member of Suomen Vastarintaliike is declared responsible of the death of a man during a demonstration. The sources the article uses (see Van Dijk 1987, 19) are messages captured from the S.O.O. themselves, which makes the sources highly legitimized – framing messages as “secret” instils the belief that they must be true, since a journalist has had to uncover them with difficulty. The final lines of the article cite messages of the S.O.O. saying that come spring, the police will be completely powerless to deal with matters – which is when S.O.O. will step in. Choosing this as the ending of the article gives an ominous feeling to the story, as if the S.O.O. is indeed planning something unknown to most Finns.

Considering the idea of a polarization with very few, distant poles (see Esteban and Ray 1994), the ideology of S.O.O. clearly forms one end of a spectrum of opinion in the article. They are presented as pretending to be tolerant in their public discourse, claiming no affiliation to Nazism and

helping anyone regardless of ethnicity, but inwardly the opposite. As these opinions can be depicted as very extreme, anyone with similar ideologies is likely to be in the same distant pole with S.O.O.

Much more clear juxtapositions of opinion, however, are found in the batch of articles regarding this event. This event bears a strong resemblance to the case of Olli Immonen's Facebook-message sensation: the emergence of street patrols, too, evoked Yle to write with dominantly two opposing frames which I identify as (1) opinions for street patrolling and (2) opinions against them. I sorted all 72 articles of this event into these categories (and a category (3) labelled as "other" representing frames or views other than for or against street patrols). The sorting was based on whether the article contained even one interviewee or angle that gave off the frame of being for or against street patrols. In some cases, the angle was easy to find already in the headline and the article contained clear opinions about street patrol groups. In other cases, the opinion, frame or angle for or against street patrols was more ambivalent. For instance, in the case of politicians, many of those interviewed presented their opinion rather vaguely, and some of interpretation was needed to place the article in any category. If, for instance, foreign minister Timo Soini says simultaneously that street patrolling cannot be restrained, but he does not accept racist street patrols, I have labelled the case into the category of "against" as well as "other".

Of the 72 articles, 26.4 % are in the category "for street patrols", and of that 26.4%, the majority of articles overlap with the other categories – in other words, the same articles might be in the category of "against street patrols" as well, or have a dominant category that fits neither for or against, in which case they might overlap with the third category labelled as "other". This is because the same article might include interviews and opinions that are "for" street patrols and "against" them. 61.1 % of the articles are in the "against" category, of which a bit less than half overlapped with the other categories. 50% went into the category "other", with about a third of the articles in this category overlapping with the other categories. It is notable that the majority of articles contain the category of "against street patrols" in one way or another. Some of the articles include notable politicians or police officers who reject street patrols.

In many articles containing the angle of "against street patrols", the interviewees have included attributes to the kind of street patrols they are against. For instance, politicians such as the Minister for Foreign Affairs Timo Soini and Minister of Finance Alexander Stubb condemned all "racist" street patrols (Kriikku in Yle news, 2016; Suhonen in Yle news, 2016). This sort of attributing makes it more difficult to understand exactly what does the media mean by talking simply about "street patrols". Some of the articles talk about groups such as S.O.O., who are variously framed as



“accused as ultra-right-wing” (Laakso in Yle news, 2016), “fighting for a white Finland” (Rummukainen in Yle news, 2016), “fanatically patriotic” and “ultra nationalist” (Ahjopalo in Yle news, 2016), and so on. On the other hand, the word “street patrol” is used of groups who go out and patrol the streets to prevent crime and theft against local small businesses (Ylikoski in Yle news, 2016) as well as of those who are going out to patrol in order to “follow closely” the newly arrived asylum seekers (Hjelt in Yle news, 2015). In some articles, this conceptual problem between street patrols with different motivations is addressed (Koivuranta in Yle news, 2016), as in some cases the word refers to civil volunteer action, and in some cases to groups such as S.O.O. In sum, the issue of people being “against” street patrols is not clear-cut: if the attribute that the interviewee adds to the question of street patrols is “a racist group”, it is not difficult to be against those kinds of street patrols.

Nevertheless, the sorting of articles reveals that there is, again, a juxtaposition of those who speak against a phenomenon and those who speak for it. In the “for street patrols” category there were, for example, members of a town whose members were afraid of the newly arrived asylum seekers and wanted to start patrolling the streets themselves, despite the police being against this idea (Hjelt in Yle news, 2015), and some politicians who did not want to ban street patrols, as the discussion about this possibility had arisen (Ristola in Yle news, 2016; Kriikku in Yle news, 2016).

The categorization further reveals that, as with the case of Olli Immonen, Yle resorted yet again to questionnaires about opinions concerning street patrols. Altogether three different questionnaires are covered in the articles of this event, each of them asking politicians about their stance to street patrols with racist, fascist or otherwise extremist leanings, or as two of the three questionnaires phrased it: do you accept street patrolling by groups characterized as “fanatically patriotic”. (Partio in Yle news, 2016; Väinämö in Yle news, 2016; Koskinen in Yle news, 2016). Two of the headlines of these three articles concerning the questionnaires use words associated with polarization. They state that street patrolling “divides opinions” between Members of Parliament (Koskinen in Yle news, 2016), and that the Members of Parliament in southeast Finland are “of different mind” about street patrolling (Partio in Yle news, 2016). The latter of these articles reveals in the lead that in fact, only one of the MPs who answered the questionnaire approves of fanatically patriotic street patrols (Partio in Yle news, 2016). In other words, the polarization of opinion that the headline and the article itself implies is, by reading further, revealed to contain a very small pole, with only one MP differing from the others’ opinions. The other article, with the headline framing the article as containing “dividing opinions”, states that the MPs’ opinions in Satakunta are “strongly divided” concerning problems regarding asylum seekers and street patrol groups. But, here again, reading the article further shows that of the eleven MPs who answered the questionnaire, only one

showed a *clear* opinion about not banning street patrols, and the majority were either ready to ban street patrols or were ambivalent about the matter. In other words, the headlines of these two example stories frame a much stronger polarization than is perhaps warranted for, based on the actual answers of the MPs in the articles. As the headline is such a powerful framing tool (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59), it is important to note here that it appears to be in the interest of the journalists to use a headline that exaggerates the actual polarization. The result of this framing is, of course, giving an overblown depiction of the actual situation, and I deem it as a polarizing choice from Yle.

Of all the articles related to this event, some 27 contained a notion regarding any kind of polarization, be it about opinions towards street patrols, asylum seekers or anything else of similar context. In some cases, the juxtaposition is very blatantly expressed: for example, in one of the 27 articles, the small district of Märynummi is said to be “divided in half” concerning their attitude to asylum seekers, and the article mentions that some residents wish to start patrolling the streets despite the police advising otherwise (Hjelt in Yle news, 2015). In other cases, the juxtaposition is subtler: for instance, one article from Yle Joensuu states that a group of ladies called “Kyllicki’s sisters” (Kyllickin siskot; Kyllicki is a female character in the Finnish national epoch the Kalevala) are “challenging” S.O.O. with the “message of love” (Rummukainen in Yle news, 2016).

What seems to connect the articles is the use of metaphors as a way to imply polarization or juxtaposition. Machin and Mayr refer to the use of rhetoric and metaphor as a way of “persuading with abstraction” in critical discourse analysis (Machin and Mayr 2012, 163). A metaphor, used in communication, will “transport processes of understanding from one realm or conceptual domain to another (Lakoff, 1993 and Lakoff and Nunez, 1997).” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 165). The process can be further dissected into the terms of “target domain” and “source domain” (Machin and Mayr 2012, citing Lakoff 1980), in which the target domain is the topic that “we want to describe through the metaphor”, and the source domain is “the concept that we draw upon in order to create the metaphor” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 165). The journalistic language of Yle in these articles describing a polarization of one type or another is littered with metaphoric language. Furthermore, the metaphors appear to be derived from a source domain of conflict and confrontation, as with the case of the district of Märynummi “dividing in half” (Hjelt in Yle news, 2015). There are further similar examples that relate to the source domain of conflict: some articles mention in passing that street patrols “have been met with conflicting attitudes” (Ylikoski in Yle news, 2016), or else that street patrols have caused heated conversations for and against them amongst the policymakers (Laakso in Yle news, 2016). In addition, there are articles that note a sense of vagueness about the attitude towards street patrols within the government and decision-makers. Some of these articles contain

notions of the government giving “conflicting” comments and opinions about the matter (Koivuranta in Yle news, 2016; Kriikku in Yle news, 2016; Koivuranta in Yle news, 2016). In addition, the three questionnaires by Yle also promote a sense of discord, as two of the three articles use the differing answers of the politicians to promote a divisional headline, as mentioned previously.

Based on these findings, I suggest there is a narrative to be found in the batch of articles for this event. Even if the articles that promote polarization are not the majority of this bulk, I argue that there are enough articles that do contain such frames or metaphors that a substantial narrative of the stories concerning street patrols becomes a conflictual one – for or against them – describing the division of opinion amongst both citizens as well as decision-makers. The use of metaphors, as described above, knits together with Pan and Kosicki’s framing device of script structure. A script is “an established and stable sequence of activities and components of an event that have been internalized as a structured mental representation of the event” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 60). It appears clear that the structured mental representation of the emergence of street patrols is littered with juxtaposition on behalf of Yle. If nothing else, the existence of three questionnaires about the case suggest that finding the different opinions of “for” and “against” street patrols was in the priority of the news agenda about the matter.

To summarize, the presence of contradictive opinions about street patrols, juxtaposition and even polarization is tangible through the various angles that can be observed in this selection of articles. In the light of the 72 articles concerning this media event, the emergence of street patrols appears to form an event in the literal sense of the word. By far the clear majority of the articles has been published during one single month, January 2016, giving for sure the impression of an event occurring, making the question of street patrols very concrete. As Tuchman observes, “the news media set the frame in which citizens discuss public events” (Tuchman 1978, ix), whereas Entman says: “Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience.” (Entman 1993, 53). I argue that the sheer volume of news articles concerning the different aspects and opinions about street patrols itself can have increased the importance of the subject in the minds of the readers of the stories. In addition, the salience of the frame that promotes juxtaposition, contradiction or division concerning opinions about street patrols is, if not dominant, certainly emphatic, as described by the examples of headlines, questionnaires and choices of words above.

Furthermore, this event has strong parallel to the case of Olli Immonen’s Facebook-post. Both cases include the use of questionnaires by Yle to clarify the different “sides” of the ideological

polarization. Both cases make use of metaphors related to contradiction and strife, and both events refer to asylum seekers as being an integral part of the emergence of the phenomenon in question.

The two poles or polarization are, as with the case of Immonen, simple enough to find from the articles concerning street patrols. As the frames of “for street patrols” and “against street patrols” can be found in some of the articles covering this event, I argue that they form the polar opposite ends of the opinion spectrum concerning (racist) street patrols. The word “racist” is worth adding here as an attribute, as many of the politicians wanted to make this distinction in their opinion about street patrols in the articles.

So, when it comes to Esteban and Ray’s example of reifying polarization through the distribution of an attribute (Esteban and Ray 1994, 824), the attribute in this case is opinion concerning (racist) street patrols. The polar opposites can be found in the articles, and what is noteworthy is that the polarization appears to be particularly salient in the choices of headlines and certain wordings in the articles. A handful of the articles mention in one way or the other that the street patrols are “dividing opinions” in certain cities (Aula in Yle news, 2015), or that they have otherwise sparked up a discussion “for” and “against” street patrols (Laakso in Yle news, 2016). However, as mentioned above, some headlines claim a “division” of opinion, when in fact only one politician is in the other end of the opinion spectrum (e.g. Partio in Yle news, 2016).

Machin and Mayr suggest that the “broader normalisation of metaphors can have consequences for the way we might organise our societies” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 185). If we consistently repeat metaphors such as “the society is a market”, we will organise our institutions authorities accordingly (Machin and Mayr 2012, 167). Similarly, if journalists often repeat the frame of strife and contradiction in questions regarding attitudes towards, for instance, street patrols and multiculturalism (as with the case of Immonen) – both of which have associations to immigration, including the arrival of asylum seekers – then these frames will come to dominate the way we view the matter. It is apparent that in the context of street patrols, they became such a notable source of divided opinions that the A2-ilta show decided to include their coverage in their broadcast. At the same time, the discussion on street patrols has span from groups including worried parents looking after their children to groups such as S.O.O. and Suomen Vastarintaliike, making the discussion even more difficult to conceptualize.

In sum, this key event has showed that in some of Yle’s coverage regarding street patrols, different poles of opinion can be found. This event also shows parallels to key event 1 concerning Immonen’s Facebook-status, thus bringing to light to the fact that Yle appears to favour coverage of

opinions of “for” and “against” in events that cause a lot of public discussion – a trend that might further the clustering characterization of opinions into poles, thus aiding polarization.

### **5.3. Key event no.3: Shutting down comment sections in news sites**

#### *5.3.1. Background*

In September 2015, *Nyt-liite*, an annex to the popular daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, published an article saying they will close their comment section because “something needs to be done” (Pullinen in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2015). Duty chief Pullinen was quoted as saying that despite promoting liberty of speech, they feel that the online discussion in their comment sections had escalated to shouting and overreactions, and these phenomena trumped the uses of having a comment section in the first place (ibid.)

Soon after, some news houses followed suit. MTV decided to restrict comment sections regarding immigration and the asylum seekers, because the refugee crisis had increased fanatical discussions online (Toivonen in Yle news, 2015). Verkkouutiset decided to do the same (ibid.).

As a course of action from the media, this is rather unprecedented. As one of journalism’s prime values is freedom of speech, it would be presumable that no media house would risk their popularity or values by shutting down comment sections, unless for dire reasons. It became apparent that these reasons were largely to do with the rise of hate speech, especially in the areas of news about immigration (Toivonen in Yle news, 2015; Pullinen in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2015) and in the case of *Nyt*-appendix, other polarizing subjects such as compulsory Swedish lessons in school and legalizing cannabis (Pullinen in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2015).

As an event, this is a striking example of journalism reacting to contending opinions in society. It shows that hate speech had reached a point where even the professionals of handling different opinions decided to take a time-out on the matter. Closing or moderating comment sections is not only a question of freedom of speech, it shows that the media itself has noted a change in the atmosphere of public discussion and finds it worthwhile constricting their regular procedure of commenting in the news articles. It serves to prove that regardless of the subject, there was such an evident rise in angry opinions online in 2015 in at least some medias, that those medias decided to react upon it. This in itself is an interesting point, but the fact that these decisions fell on the timeline of my thesis warranted closer inspection. Finally, the fact that the editor-in-chief of MTV directly

attributed the refugee crisis as one source of hate speech in their case lead me to choose this event as one important aspect of the intercourse of journalism and polarization.

### 5.3.2. *Analysing the most read and the most shared articles*

This key event featured only two articles from Yle, but as an event, it cannot be bypassed. Even though the number of articles is scarce, the gesture that is covered is emphatic: to this day (June 2017), one of the media in question (*Nyt*-appendix to *Helsingin Sanomat*) has not opened their comment sections.

I suggest the value of this event lies more in its implications, rather than in the word choices or lexical structures of the two articles relating the case. I will use the media framing and CDA tools to analyse both the dominant frames of the data, and in addition, to decipher what the reaction of the media in this case tells us about polarization, rather than dwell excessively in the detailed lexical and other structures of the articles. Starting with the contents of the most read and shared article, it contains assertions about what are some of the causes of hate speech, based on the citations picked from the interviewees. It highlights the topics of immigration and asylum seekers being the reason for shutting down comment sections in certain cases, and the chosen quotations from the interviewee even link Olli Immonen's Facebook-post into the topic.

The most read and, simultaneously, the most shared article of these two is an article relating the heart of the matter, the shutting down of comment sections by some notable media. The article has received 29 180 page views (by March 2017) and has been shared approximately 3390 times on Facebook (by Shared Count statistics). The headline translates as: "Fed up with hate speech – MTV and HS are restraining internet commenting" (in Finnish: "Mitta täyttyi vihapuheesta – MTV ja HS rajoittavat nettikommentointia") (Toivonen in Yle news, 2015).

First, I turn to Pan and Kosicki's ideas about the power of a headline (see Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). The initial frame bore by the headline is, then, that hate speech is such a dominating feature of online discussion that the media has had no choice but to react upon it. As to the lexical choices, the headline contains words with strong emotional charge. "Fed up" (*Mitta täyttyi*) is a telling pair of words, and uses a metaphor in referring to having reached one's level of patience (see Machin and Mayr, 2012). It gives the impression of the media being angry, like a parent would be, at the behaviour of the audience. "Hate speech" is another interesting lexical, even rhetorical

choice in the headline. It belongs to Pan and Kosicki's category of syntactical structure, and as a concept, certainly evokes many "semantically related concepts" in the minds of the readers (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59). "Fed up with hate speech" immediately gives the impression of increased aggression in society, and implies that hate speech has reached a point where the media is no longer willing to deal with it.

The content of the article consists of interviews from Yle's editor-in-chief as well as the editor-in-chief of MTV news, who both give their views on the situation that evoked this reaction from the media. They both frame the issue as increased aggression in online discussions, and state as a fact that the discussion has escalated to hateful tones quite recently. The editor-in-chief of Yle points out that they have been restricting commenting for a few years already, since it had not yielded constructive dialogue. It is then left for the editor-in-chief of MTV, Merja Ylä-Anttila, to define where the current hate speech surge has come from.

According to her, it is the refugee crisis that brought about over-heated commenting and hate speech in MTV comment sections, which is why those topics are now closed from comments. Ylä-Anttila is cited as saying that "black and white reactions" to those matters have hardened still further, and "for one reason or another", the discussion has culminated "in the very last few weeks". She also ensures that it is a coincidence that both MTV and *Nyt*-appendix decided to act simultaneously. She figures that it seems to be the current zeitgeist, and goes on to say, "Trolling and racism –discussion, Immonen-sensation and other similar things have been feeding this".

This last statement contains a whole array of information. Trolling, racism and Immonen-case have all been put on the same line, making them as equal and comparable reasons for the increased hate speech. The fact that the editor-in-chief of a large news organisation says this, and Yle, another large media house quotes it, gives the matter a lot of weight. While trolling and racism are rather ambiguous concepts, the fact that Ylä-Anttila is cited as naming "the Immonen-sensation" as an event that has been feeding hate speech is a substantial matter. In my first key event that dealt specifically with the case of Immonen, I counted 110 articles from Yle alone that either cover the case or at least mention Immonen somehow. The volume of keeping Immonen's Facebook-post in the minds of the audience is, therefore, extensive. The fact that Ylä-Anttila then cites "the Immonen-sensation" as one of the reasons for fuelling hate speech begs the question: has the wide media coverage on the matter been a part of this fuelling?

Ylä-Anttila mentions the refugee crisis as one reason for escalated hate speech, where as another media mentioned in the article, Verkkouutiset, claims that the immigration conversation

has “run out of hand”. In addition, *Iltaalehti* is cited as “still not opening commenting on certain stories”, such as immigration, religion and “other sensitive matters”. *Nyt*-appendix’s duty editor is paraphrased as describing that the conversations have escalated into shouting and have been generally of poor quality as well as contained name-calling and threats.

I argue that this article, and this event, is a case of *a* media (Yle) allowing *the* media, meaning several news outlets, to define a conflictual situation. In fact, it can be argued that the whole event is birthed by the media, as they are the ones reacting to a situation as well as covering the case. In this event, *a* media is letting *the* media use its power to give the issue a frame. Using Entman’s tools for defining the function of a frame, it is discernible that Yle lets the media to define the problem (hate speech), diagnoses its causes (refugee crisis, immigration, poor quality of conversation), make moral judgments (people do not know how to behave online) and suggest a remedy (shut down comment sections or restrict them more heavily) (see Entman 1993, 52). Fulfilling all of these frame functions in one article shows, I argue, a high use of the power of the media to define issues and make them it salient to the audience (ibid.).

Interestingly, the other article by Yle covering this event has an almost opposite frame: it uses experts to criticise the mass media about their reactions to (De Fresnes in Yle news, 2015). Three people – one researcher, one CEO of a competing media house and one Yle reporter – have discussed the case in a morning show, and this text article summarizes the discussion. It is worth remembering that since Yle has not been shutting down comment sections, Yle is not exercising self-criticism in this article, but rather taking part in a discourse that blames “the mass media” of overreacting.

The article features a frame of critique. The cited experts are paraphrased as saying that closing the comment sections was a “bad solution to hate speech”, and that the Finnish mass media is acting prematurely (De Fresnes in Yle news, 2015). One interviewee, Pauli Aalto-Setälä, CEO of Aller media, even says that there is no large increase of hate speech in the internet forum he manages, and that most of the disturbing content might be produced by only a handful of people. Juxtaposed with the first article relating to this event, the spectrum of reactions spans from emphasizing an issue with hate speech to the downplaying of the same issue, from reacting strongly to reacting cautiously.

On a larger scale, the polarization spectrum in this event ties into a larger context of the side effects of the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate. I find that the first article contains the frame of associating refugee- and immigration topics with hate speech, and diagnosing an increased amount of hate speech in comment sections. The first article promotes a “particular causal



interpretation” of hate speech escalation as a result of, inter alia, immigration- and refugee related topics, and mentions trolling, racism and the Immonen-case feeding the flame (Entman 1993, 52; Toivonen in Yle news, 2015). It thus selects “some aspects of a perceived reality” and makes them “more salient” than others (Entman 1993, 52.) The second article’s general frame is that the media is reacting prematurely. The central message conveyed using quotations from interviewees is that the comment sections should not be closed, but rather moderated (De Fresnes in Yle news, 2015).

In the wider context of the polarization discussion, these two articles promote two different frames: the first article sees hate speech as a problem on the rise, the other feels the media has jumped the gun and should not restrict free commenting. Based on the number of media reacting to hate speech, however, I would deem that the dominant story between these two is the first article’s frame. As it is also much more shared and read than the latter article, I argue that its views have raised a lot of resonance in the readers.

In sum, this event shows how ambiguous polarization can be. Both articles promote a *perception* of reality, based on different media’s observations – one article represents the reality as conflictual, the other downplays it. The audience is left to decide which reality to choose from, and I propose this shows the power of the media in portraying alternative frames over the same situation. In cases like these, I argue it is the salience of the frame (see Entman 1993) that would logically influence which reality the audience chooses. In this case, it would be the frame presented in the first article referring to increased hate speech, based on the readership and sharing rates of the said article.

I conclude that the coverage of this case shows how the media’s version – perception – of events (such as the increase of hate speech) can turn into a representation of reality. As some of the media reacted to hate speech by shutting down comment sections, they made visible and concrete their own perception of a Finland littered with hate speech – hate speech that could be rephrased as extreme opinions. Thus, the event reifies a perception of a latent polarization of opinion in Finland, and shows how the media itself can have a role in defining the issue. The links to the definition of polarization are, in this regard, rather direct. By claiming an increase in hate speech and in attributing things such as the refugee crisis and Immonen’s statements as part of the reasons for it, the media is representing Finland as a country of increased extremities (i.e. the increase in hate speech). In this way, the perception of a divided Finland is folded in this event subtly, and falls into the larger thematic of this thesis of journalism representing our reality as potentially divisive.

## 5.4. Key event no.4: A2-ilta broadcast

### 5.4.1. Background

A2-ilta is Yle's programme that has been broadcasted in different forms since 1989 (Rantanen in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016). The programme usually discusses some polemic topic with selected studio guests, who typically display different opinions about the topic, including both "civilians" as well as experts in the field and experts by experience. The name of the programme means "A2-evening" in English. Notable examples of A2-broadcasts have been "Homosexuality evening", which was arranged twice, first in 1996 and then in 2010 (Yle 2010). The latter event caused a huge wave of people leaving the church – about 20 000 individuals left the church within a week of the programme (Yle 2010), showing how much power the programme can have. The programme is generally rather popular, and it is therefore not indifferent who participates in the show and how the selected matter is discussed.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, Yle hosted an A2-ilta broadcast with the title and theme "Turvatomuusilta", Insecurity evening. The show was plugged with some news articles that spoke about the guest selection as well as the contents of the show, and with interviews of some of the guests. One news article that Yle released to "advertise" the broadcast bore the headline: "A2 Insecurity evening: are asylum seekers a threat – will our system of values collapse?" (A2 Turvatomuus-ilta: Ovatko turvapaikanhakijat uhka – romahtaako arvomaailmamme?) (Nieminen in Yle news, 2016). Its lead states: "There's fear on the streets. Especially the growing number of asylum seekers is increasing the sense of insecurity. The first A2-ilta of the spring asks, do we need street patrols and should we change our immigration policies." (ibid.). This headline and lead provide a very strong frame for the upcoming show. The idea of asylum seekers increasing our sense of insecurity is provided as a statement, unsourced in the lead, and it is a very bold claim about how things were in the Finnish society in March 2016. The source of the claim – a study conducted by the Finnish Defence Forces – is revealed only later in the article. Another article (the most read and shared one of the ones related to the broadcast) featured a lady who was to be one of the "ordinary folk" guests on the show. She says she is so scared by the asylum seeker shelter in her neighbourhood that she walks her daughter to school every day (Savin in Yle news, 2016). There were some other news articles published about the show beforehand, too, that were less controversial, but also less read based on Yle's statistics.

These articles, and particularly the one promoting the show by attributing the sense of insecurity as springing from the arrival of the asylum seekers and asking whether the whole nation is

being divided, set the tone for broadcast ahead of time. The publication of the guest list was another source of sensation. Two guests cancelled their appearance on the day of the broadcast. They cancellations were the first not ethnically “fully” Finnish Members of Parliament in decades, Nasima Razmyar and Jani Toivola. Razmyar cited the presence of the chairman of the Finnish Defence League as one reason to not attend, saying that “racist or discriminating movements or ideologies cannot be an equal voice amongst others” (Paavilainen and Dahlblom in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016). *Helsingin Sanomat* has described Finnish Defence League (FDL) as “fanatically nationalist” (Paavilainen and Dahlblom, 2016), and the group takes a stand against what they call “radical Islam” (Finnish Defence League, no date of publishing). Razmyar also said that the program is usually in favour of confrontation or juxtaposition, and not aiming for constructive dialogue (Paavilainen and Dahlblom in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016). In addition, the chairwoman of the Somali network of Finland, Saido Mohamed, cancelled her attendance, and several Members of Parliament announced in social media their refusal to attend the show after being invited to participate.

The original guest list was published on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, a day before the broadcast. In general, it appeared difficult to get guests to attend the show, as mentioned by the producer of the program Juha Portaankorva (Paavilainen and Dahlblom in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016). He said that those asked to join feared to talk about their sense of security in public in fear of being labelled as racists. On the other hand, said Portaankorva, they were afraid of being stigmatized as extremely tolerant if they were in the same show with other extremely tolerant people (Paavilainen and Dahlblom in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016). This shows that before the broadcast, the invitees – supposedly mainly politicians, based on the referred article by *Helsingin Sanomat* – appeared to find the guest list intolerable and the show itself as not worthy to attend. MTV wrote a news piece about the situation and cited several Tweets from politicians, and from their article it is evident that inviting a member of the Finnish Defence League was the key issue for several people to not attend (Hannula in MTV3 news 2016). The uproar before the broadcast sparked the other host of program, Markus Liimatainen, to write a rather snappish column about how he is not ashamed to make this broadcast, even if people call it “shit”. According to Liimatainen, his point was to build a bridge between the quarrelling groups and to find solutions to disagreements (Liimatainen in Yle news 2016).

The anger concerning the then upcoming broadcast, especially in the realm of social media, was further fuelled by a Tweet from the A2-ilta (now called A-teema) account. This infamous Tweet was the program’s response to the wide critique over choosing a member of the Finnish Defence League as a guest. A translation of the Tweet is: “Polar opposites are shouting in the internet, but before this they haven’t been managed to get to the same space to have a genuine discussion.

That's why FDL is also in.” (see fig 3. in Appendix) (use of passive verb form here is intentional, as the original Tweet uses passive in Finnish, and thus the translation would be less accurate if translated to an active form. FDL is the acronym for Finnish Defence League). Jouni Sirén, chairman of Tampere Left Alliance, asked in his Tweet, what is the other polar opposite compared to FDL. To this, A2-ilta replied: “Everyone defines it themselves, for some it is a tolerant [person], for some it is an extreme-immigrant-critical [person].” (A2-ilta Tweets, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016). After this, there were numerous responses to A2-ilta's Twitter account, most of them critical. The general perception about FDL in this conversation was that they do not belong into the same continuum with the other guests, who included, for instance, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the chairman of the Iraqi Culture Forum. After the program, *Helsingin Sanomat* wrote an article about the broadcast and said the producer of the show, Portaankorva, apologized for using the term “polar opposite” or “extremity”. According to Portaankorva, the term caused a lot of uproar and probably contributed to some of the guests cancelling. (Rantanen in *Helsingin Sanomat* 2016).

#### 5.4.2. Analysis of A2-ilta

In this chapter, I will simultaneously describe and analyse the content of the show using CDA and media frame analysis while merging the notions with theories of polarization. At the end, I will provide a summary of the key findings of this chapter. Starting with the guest list, the attendance of the broadcast was:

1. Sari Hassinen, a mother from Niinisalo, who is extremely concerned about the security of the local children after an asylum seeker reception centre was built near the school.
2. Ville Skinnari, Member of Parliament from the Social-Democratic Party of Finland.
3. Jukka Ketonen, chairman of Finnish Defense League, a group cited as “ultra right wing” in the media (e.g. *Turun Sanomat* 2013).
4. Haider Al-Hello, chairman of the Iraqi Culture Forum of Finland.
5. Lasse Aapio, chief constable of Helsinki Police.
6. Heikki Hiilamo, professor of social politics in Helsinki University.
7. Jyrki Paretskoi, author.
8. Veera Ruoho, Member of Parliament from the Finns Party.
9. Mari Nezihe Poyraz, rape survivor, recovering from a rape by a Somali asylum seeker.

10. Päivi Nerg, chancellor, interior minister
11. Antti Häkkänen, Member of Parliament from the National Coalition Party.
12. Atanas Aleksovski, head of industry at Tampere Vocational College.
13. Jone Nikula, Radio Host.
14. Jari-Pekka Teurajärvi, founder of street patrol group Street Hawks.
15. Makwan Amirkhani, Mixed Martial Arts fighter, (surprise guest).
16. Tomi Kuosmanen, head of Saarijärvi asylum seeker reception centre.
17. Juri Nieminen, mayor of Asikkala.
18. and 19. Linnea Mynttinen and Ali Kamil Al-Sammaraie (surprise guests), an 80-year old woman who hired Al-Sammaraie as her personal assistant and had been in the headlines as an extremely frank defender of asylum seekers.

Two of the guests, Skinnari and Aleksovski, were asked to join the show after two initial guests cancelled (Nieminen, Damström and Hurttä in Yle news 2016). There are two lecterns in the studio where the invited guests sit. A2-ilta always features a studio divided visibly in half with the seating, placing some invited guests on one side, some on the other (see Appendix, fig. 2). This is the usual arrangement of the studio and therefore not out of the ordinary in this broadcast. The journalists usually host their leads in the middle area of the studio set and take into walking amongst the studio guests during questions and inserts.

The audience is not apparent in the format, as there is no traditional studio audience. The only people present are the ones seen on the seats. One of the hosts described the seating arrangements as having guests on the first two rows and the audience behind them. It is clear from the structure of the show that what the host refers to as an “audience” consists of invited guests, as many of them speak during the show and are people of relevance to the topic. However, there were some “audience” members who I would label as “prop guests”. These were guests who sat on the highest benches of the ascending, amphitheatre-like seats, and did not speak during the show. Therefore, I label them “props” – they appeared to be people who were invited there to either give an impression of a fuller attendance or simply to represent certain groups that were mentioned in the discussion. Amongst them were Middle Eastern looking ladies wearing scarfs and elderly Finnish people.

The broadcast’s rough script is to invite a specific guest in, interview them briefly on camera and then let them take their seat, followed by a discussion with everyone seated. Most guests

and the “audience” are already seated from the start, but some guests had been selected to make a separate entry, most likely due to their particular contribution to the topic. The hosts give permissions to speak to each invitee and member of “audience” who raises their hand. The way the hosts steer the conversation appears to be in the style of an argument, followed by a reaction. A lot of the statements are based on one guest saying something, and the hosts picking the most suitable person from the pool of guests to answer the question, while also giving turns to those raising their hand in the audience voluntarily. The downside of this style of hosting the program is that the show gives a distinct feeling of constant reactivity and even juxtaposition, where one person raises an issue and another is asked to answer the issue. This creates a tone of constant argument–counter-argument - rhetoric, especially since some of the questions raised by the discussants were rather poignant. During some statements, this type of hosting even put the guests up against each other if their views were differing about the topic. In only one case, however, did this type of hosting lead to a minor verbal confrontation between two guests (Mari Nezihe Poyraz and Jone Nikula).

As the duration of the whole program is 1 hour and 32 minutes with no commercial breaks, it is not possible to analyse the show exhaustively in this thesis. Therefore, this thesis will concentrate on the start of the show, which, I argue, sets the tone of the whole programme, and then analyses dominant frames of the show as well as certain journalistic choices in the framework of polarization.

The first thing that the viewer sees at the start of the broadcast are the two hosts, Annika Damström (AD) and Markus Liimatainen (ML) addressing the audience at home directly to camera. The program’s opening lines are (translated to English):

AD: What is it about asylum seekers that scare us, are street patrols a threat, is our society dividing in half?

ML: There are many types of insecurity. Tonight, we will discuss what sort of fears immigration causes.

AD: How do we make Finland safe for *everyone* [emphasis on the word], and how do we find mutual understanding?

ML: Welcome to watch the biggest discussion show in Finland!

These word choices are a powerful start to a broadcast. The words appear to be an attempt to directly address topics that perhaps are – or are assumed to be – in the mind of most Finns. The opening lines also make assumptions: that asylum seekers indeed scare us, that street patrols are potentially threatening, and that there is a possibility of division in our society. These opening words set the tone of the broadcast. I argue that the opening lines function in a similar way to a headline and a lead in a

text-based news article – they summarize what the content is about, and provide us with the primary information we should know about the upcoming subject. Therefore, following Pan and Kosicki's ideas about the headline and the lead as powerful framing devices (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59–60), I put forward that the dominant frame of the programme is already set by the opening lines. As Pan and Kosicki phrase it: "A good lead will give a story a newsworthy angle, suggesting a particular perspective to view the event reported." (ibid.) Furthermore, Entman points out that frames can "define problems", "make moral judgments" and even "suggest remedies" (Entman 1993, 52) all of which are fulfilled in the first opening lines. The opening of the broadcast suggests, albeit in the form of a question, that asylum seekers do scare us, asks whether street patrols are a threat, and whether our nation is dividing in half (defining problems). It suggests a remedy by saying: "Tonight we will discuss what sort of fears immigration causes", and proposes that mutual understanding is the key question to be solved; and it makes a moral judgment by pointing out that immigration causes fears and that we should discuss the matter.

To further analyse how the beginning of the show sets the mood, I refer to Van Dijk and critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk brings into attention the common distinction between macro- and microlevels of interaction in critical discourse analysis. According to Van Dijk, these two levels form "one unified whole" in everyday interaction (Van Dijk 2001, 354). As an example, Van Dijk explains that a racist speech in parliament is "a discourse at the microlevel of social interaction in the specific situation of a debate, but at the same time may enact or be a constituent part of legislation or the reproduction of racism at the macrolevel". (Van Dijk 2001, 354). The idea is interesting and I find it applicable to journalism. It comes close to Scheufele's point about "how media provide audiences with schemas for interpreting events" (Scheufele 1999, 107, citing Entman 1993). In both theories, someone – in this case, the media – produces a message the implications of which resonate in a much larger context than where the message is conveyed. When the A2-ilta hosts ask, "Is our society dividing in half", they are, following Scheufele's and Entman's ideas, feeding the audience with a frame of reference, characterized in this case by a division in society. Combining this with Van Dijk's thoughts, the platform here is a broadcasted tv-show, which takes this microlevel interaction to a macrolevel, addressing an entire audience – a nation – watching the broadcast at home. In this way, social interaction – journalism – in a microlevel transfers into the macrolevel, and the frames suggested move from one level to the other alongside with the interaction.

Critical discourse analysis is predominantly concerned with social power abuse, issues concerning dominance and inequality, and the way these paradigms are reproduced or resisted (Van Dijk 2001, 352). Van Dijk also discusses the notion of power as means to control (Van Dijk 2001,

354–355). He describes the power of journalists as “more or less persuasive”, which can be based on “knowledge, information or authority” (Van Dijk 2001, 355). From this vantage point, *A2-ilta* is a well-orchestrated display of the power of the media, from the very beginning. The opening of the *A2-ilta* show gives a notion of authority of the journalists, as does the composition of the show. Having two journalists in a professional-looking studio addressing the audience directly to camera during the prime hours of the evening television gives a strong feeling of power: these journalists are there to decide how we are to discuss insecurities, from what viewpoint, and who gets to speak.

Looking at the whole of the broadcast and paying particular attention to the hosts’ statements, I identified seven dominant sub-frames to the overall theme of insecurity, linked with the arrival of asylum seekers, which the hosts suggested. They are: (1) fears caused by immigration and asylum seekers, (2) fears caused by street patrols, (3) insecurity experienced by asylum seekers, (4) asylum seekers as a force that need to be integrated to Finnish culture, (5) ridding ourselves from fears, (6) Finland as divided into opinion groups, and (7) costs of asylum seekers and division of available jobs between Finns and asylum seekers.

These frames have been identified by watching the broadcast, examining the transcript based on the word choices of the hosts and recognizing the different ways insecurity and asylum seekers are discussed during the show. The first and second of these frames were already suggested in the very beginning of the show, as indicated earlier in the analysis. The third frame was first introduced by the hosts when interviewing surprise guest Makwan Amirkhani about his immigrant background, and the idea of insecurity amongst refugees or asylum seekers was suggested. The fourth frame was introduced by the hosts while addressing the originally non-native Finnish guests in an attempt cover insecurities experienced by the asylum seekers. The notable issue is that there were no asylum seekers (meaning people still with that status) in the studio. The fifth frame was introduced by the hosts as a question to the studio guests, with the request for everyone to start giving suggestions about getting rid of our fears. The sixth frame I picked up based on its frequency: I counted that division of some level in Finland was mentioned by the hosts in their leads eight times, and I therefore deduced it to be a rather strong implication of the hosts increasing the salience of this frame. The last frame rose from the studio guests’ discussion rather than the hosts, but the hosts then picked up the theme for further discussion.

These salience of these sub-frames is based mainly on their emphasis, frequency and suggestiveness by the hosts. As this thesis pays attention to the role of *journalism* in polarization, I have analysed the statements of the two hosts during the programme and recognised these frames from their choices of words. The frames I identified are strongly linked with Entman’s notions of



frame functions (Entman 1993, 52) which are a guiding line along with the other tools from media framing and CDA in my following analysis of the sub-frames. The impact of these seven sub-frames is evident through the broadcast, as they not only steer the conversation, but also dominate how the viewer comes to reflect upon the phenomena the show discusses.

*The first sub-frame: fears caused by immigration and asylum seekers*

The overarching, primary frame of the whole show is that of insecurity or fear, as hinted by the title of the show. Going into a further analysis of the seven sub-frames, the first sub-frame I identified here is fears caused by immigration and asylum seekers. This frame is introduced right after the opening lines of the show: the first guest of the evening who is invited in for a brief interview is Sari Hassinen, a mother who is afraid of the asylum seekers in her town and expresses her concern especially as to what the asylum seekers can do to harm children. Since she is the first interviewed guest, she gets to set the first tone of discussion, at least for the first minutes of the show. To use Entman's (1993) terminology, she gets to "define the problem" as well as "make moral judgments" in her brief interview, where she states that the asylum seekers have committed atrocities all over Finland and she is worried about her own children's safety. As Hassinen is a choice by the journalists as the first guest, it is, by proxy, the hosts who are defining the problem by letting Hassinen have the first words. As Jullian has noted, using quotations – in this case, letting a guest speak – is a way for the journalist to retain authority over the message while distancing him- or herself from "the responsibility for what is said." (Jullian 2011, 769, citing Scollon 1998). However, it is noteworthy that the hosts do not let Hassinen speak entirely freely, but rather ask her some clarifying examples about these "atrocities" committed by the asylum seekers and point out that "nothing has happened", but state that still, her fears have been evoked.

Going to the details of the show in general, most of the discussion during the broadcast was concerned with the threats or challenges asylum seekers pose towards Finns. Of the 19 guests, four were either former refugees or asylum seekers, based on how they talked about themselves or how the hosts addressed them. They were Makwan Amirkhani, Haider Al-Hello, Atanas Aleksovski and Ali Kamil Al-Sammaraie. The fact that the rest of the 15 guests were not asylum seekers or refugees is in itself quite revealing as to the dynamics of the program, and most likely had an impact in why the challenges caused by asylum seekers to Finns outweighed the number of challenges caused by Finns or street patrols to asylum seekers in the discussion. This, I put forward, is an example of applied frame salience (Entman 1993): letting certain actors have more space to speak over others

means that the frame of the majority is the dominant view. Furthermore, the way mass media presents events, in this case the asylum seeker crisis, can affect the way the audience understands the event (Scheufele 1999, 107, citing Price, Tewksbury and Powers, 1995). I argue that by selecting a Finn-oriented guest list, choosing the opening lines of the show and choosing the first interviewee of the evening from a specific viewpoint all contribute to framing asylum seekers as a threat that needs to be addressed. This is not to say that the reporters are intentionally being negative towards asylum seekers; from the tone of the show it appears their intent is in addressing fears that they have identified from the existing public discussion. However, intentions do not save from the impact of discourse, and I argue that the overarching frame of the show was viewing asylum seekers and the issues related to them as a potential threat and an item to be solved.

The way in which this practice is connected to polarization is by having the discussion being dominated by different perceptions instead of, say, statistics or facts. As Randall Collins has pointed out, polarization is connected to a group *imagining* what the opposite party is doing or saying. He notes: “This supports my point that it is the perception of atrocities that produces polarization, not just violence per se”. (Collins 2012, 4). Similarly, it is the perception of atrocities that is at play here, starting from the very beginning of the program and highlighted by Hassinen’s interview. Even if the hosts point out that nothing has happened yet regarding the asylum seekers, it is the perceived atrocities that Hassinen gets to voice out that gives the issue emphasis. The hosts are thus partaking in disseminating these perceptions by letting Hassinen have the opening interview of the broadcast. Similarly, the opening lines of the show, asking for why asylum seekers scare us, are fundamentally based on perceptions and emotions, which have an important role in polarization. As Collins notes, “Anger and fear toward the enemy is one of the strongest and most contagious emotions.” (Collins 2012, 2). I therefore conclude that the hosts’ rather neutral style of steering conversation and asking guests to make comments is an example of pushing the burden of challenging the frame of fear to the studio guests, rather than the journalists themselves taking control over the matter.

#### *The second sub-frame: fears caused by street patrols*

The second dominant frame in the show is fears caused by street patrols. It is noteworthy that within the programme, two very different types of street patrol groups were juxtaposed: on the one hand, groups such as Soldiers of Odin were mentioned, and a member of the FDL was present. These street patrols have been noted in the media as having violent and racist potentialities (Savikko in Yle news, 2016). On the other hand, one guest was a member of a group called Street Hawks, who has not been

widely noted by the media, and does not seem to have ideological connotations to any specific leaning. According to Teurajärvi from the Street Hawks, who spoke in the show, it makes a difference as to who is doing the street patrolling and with what motivation. He gave the impression that Street Hawks is more about parents patrolling the nightlife and keeping an eye on the youth than anything else.

Grouping together Soldiers of Odin (S.O.O.) or the FDL with other street patrols gives the implication of there being only one type of street patrolling taking place in Finland. Juxtaposing a group who is being followed by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, such as S.O.O. (e.g. Savikko in Yle news 2016) and parents looking after their youth is a rather blatant comparison. It evokes an association: by using the word “street patrols” of both groups like Street Hawks as well as S.O.O., the hosts are softening the potential dangerousness of groups like S.O.O. by suggesting they are on the same level with groups such as Street Hawks. In fact, the hosts mentioned that they tried to invite S.O.O. into the studio as guests, but the group declined. Thus, the media is actively taking part in making the concept of street patrols ambiguous, and it becomes unclear to what the word refers to. This, I argue, is a potentially dangerous mix-up, as some street patrols have vigilante connotations (such as S.O.O.), some neo-Nazi connotations (Vastarintaliike) and some appear to be neighbourhood watch-type groups (Street Hawks).

More importantly, the question of whether street patrols are a source of a threat was left entirely up to the guests to decide. The hosts took no stand or final comment on the matter, and when they asked for one guest’s opinion on S.O.O., they did not bring into attention the potential criminal and racist nature of the group in question. The hosts resorted to giving turns for different guests to speak, some of whom had more authority on the matter (the police), and some of whom were merely commenting based on their own experiences.

The hosts are here, using Entman’s frame guidelines, suggesting a problem – that the street patrols seem like a threat. The hosts do not mention where they picked up this assumption from. This leads to the deduction that they are exercising journalistic power in choosing and identifying “the forces creating the problem” (Entman 1993, 52) and introducing the phenomenon as true by default value. By then letting the guests use turns of speech back and forth, each having a different opinion about street patrols, the hosts are giving an even value to all opinions. This, I propose, is a choice that can have implications to an emerging polarization of opinion.

I suggest that by letting each guest introduce their opinion without bringing up the issues related to groups such as the FDL or S.O.O., the hosts are doing what Mutz describes as legitimising certain opinions. What Mutz describes is the legitimization of extreme opinions, but I believe the same logic is applicable cases where different viewpoints are given an almost equal value. As the guests

introduce their differing opinions on the matter, some of which are in favour of street patrols, some of which are less in favour of them, I argue the hosts are widening the range of opinions that are acceptable (see Mutz 2006, 239). Simultaneously, they are legitimising the existence of extreme groups by discussing them on the same level with less controversial groups, such as the Street Hawks.

It is apparent from both the guests' opinions as well as from various news articles (see key event 2) that Finns have differing opinions about street patrolling, and the matter has been discussed even amongst the Members of Parliament (see e.g. Koskinen in Yle news, 2016). As A2-ilta is not an isolated show, disconnected from society around us, I propose that by bringing the street patrols into discussion without identifying the key issues regarding them, the hosts may have enforced a rather supportive view about *all* street patrols. The impact was somewhat cushioned by the fact that there were experts, such as a representative of the police, present to discuss their view on the matter. The key problem remains, however, the legitimization of groups with extremist connotations by introducing them to the same journalistic space with the rest of the guests.

#### *The third sub-frame: insecurity experienced by asylum seekers*

The third sub-frame of insecurity experienced by asylum seekers was introduced by the hosts when they welcomed in a surprise guest, Makwan Amirkhani, from whom the hosts inquired about insecurities he might have felt towards himself or his family. The conversation, however, quickly turned into the hosts asking Amirkhani about tips for integration concerning the newly arrived asylum seekers. The sub-frame thus partially shifted from insecurity to seeing asylum seekers as a group that needs integration to the Finnish culture (see the fourth sub-frame). In addition, the hosts were both connecting Amirkhani to the group known as “us”, which in Van Dijk’s theory is associated with positive attributes, and “them”, which associates with less desirable qualities (Ramanathan and Tan 201, 59, citing Van Dijk 1995). Amirkhani here represents both “us” as an already integrated immigrant, but is also asked to speak on behalf of “them”, the newcomers.

Later, the hosts brought into limelight the possible concerns regarding the so-called “paperless” asylum seekers, referring to concerns about those who stay in Finland despite a negative resolution concerning their permission to stay. The hosts also asked the chairman of the Iraqi Culture Forum of Finland about his views concerning the insecurities the asylum seekers might encounter. Finally, the hosts discussed the possibility of increasing hate crimes if the reversion of asylum seekers who have received a negative resolution is not efficient enough (referring to hate crimes committed against the asylum seekers).

It is interesting to note that the hosts did not label the asylum seekers' possible sense of insecurity as originating from the Finns as a group, whereas, for example, guest Sari Hassinen was directly asked about insecurities she feels that were caused by asylum seekers as a group. In other words, the source of the insecurities felt by the asylum seekers was not named, other than referring to hate crimes without naming a perpetrator. The source of the insecurities felt by the Finns, on the other hand, was often discussed as originating specifically from the asylum seekers. Thus, the hosts use the power of framing by diagnosing the causes of the insecurity felt by the Finns (see Entman 1993, 52), but doing less so in diagnosing the causes of insecurity felt by the asylum seekers, other than mentioning becoming "paperless" and referring to hate crimes in general without a source.

In addition, there were no asylum seekers – meaning people *currently* asylum seekers by status – as guests to answer feelings of personal threat, whereas there were Finns in the audience to talk about threats they felt coming from the asylum seekers. This setting, I suggest, invokes a feeling of a dominant group, the Finns, and a marginal group, the asylum seekers, whose feelings of insecurity appeared less valid through not being represented in the studio. Furthermore, it means that the hosts let other people – former asylum seekers, Finns and themselves – to speak on behalf of the newly arrived asylum seekers.

I propose that, in the context of this thesis, the journalists' choice to not involve asylum seekers themselves to speak about insecurity is one way to decrease the salience of a frame (see Entman 1993). Furthermore, this sub-frame connects to the fourth and the first sub-frame: in some contexts where the hosts discuss possible insecurity felt by asylum seekers, they either connect the conversation to the question of how they can be better integrated to Finnish culture (fourth sub-frame) and how the "paperless" might cause issues in Finnish societies (first sub-frame). This is also one way in which the importance of the insecurity of the asylum seekers – frame becomes less pronounced. In sum, the asylum seekers are discussed both as victims of potential insecurity threats, but they are also connected to posing a threat themselves by, for example, going underground as "paperless". Thus, the insecurities they might feel become less salient, and they are connected to a frame of posing a possible nuisance for the Finnish society.

#### *The fourth sub-frame: asylum seekers as a force that needs to be integrated to Finnish culture*

The fourth dominant frame is that of the asylum seekers as a group that needs to be integrated to Finnish culture. This frame was introduced by the hosts early on, as they invited in the first surprise

guest, Makwan Amirkhani, a well-known MMA-fighter. The question of “us vs. them” was therefore brought into the discussion, and was later amplified throughout the show by both the guests as well as the hosts. This “*us* versus *them*” –setting is part of Van Dijk’s CDA framework that aims to expose the presence of an ideology, the underlying assumptions that control the thoughts of a social group (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 59, citing Van Dijk, 1995). In the light of Van Dijk’s framework that aims to expose the underlying ideological stance (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 60), it appears that the hosts tend to choose wordings that expose two social groups in their ideology: “Finns” and “non-Finns”. For instance, host Mikko Liimatainen speaks of “these young men” referring to the whole group of asylum seekers (22 000 to 32 000 arrivals according to the show), and then asks one former asylum seeker, Amirkhani, as to how these “young men” should be integrated to follow “our rules”. Van Dijk’s framework’s (called the “ideological square”) principles state that part of an ideology is to “emphasize positive things about Us” and “emphasize negative things about Them” (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 60). In host Liimatainen’s wordings of “these young men” and “our rules”, he makes a very clear distinction between two groups – “Us”, which I take here to mean Finns; “and Them”, referring to the asylum seekers. And, by asking Amirkhani as to how *they* should be integrated to follow *our* rules, Liimatainen is preferring “our rules” to theirs by indicating that it is a given that the newcomers should oblige to “our rules”.

By reiterating asylum seekers as “us” and “them”, the A2-ilta hosts come to reinforce an ideology where asylum seekers are some form of “other”, not a part of “us”, and in need of integration. This type of discourse is identifiable in other statements made by the hosts, too. When host Annika Damström asks the chairman of the Finnish-Iraqi cultural forum Haider Al-Hello to react to guest Sari Hassinen’s fears about asylum seekers, Damström also makes a categorization: Al-Hello has once arrived as an immigrant and is thus qualified to answer Hassinen’s fears. Al-Hello is here categorized into a similar group than the “young men” coming in now, although Al-Hello has arrived in Finland over 20 years ago (Jämsen in Yle news 2016). He is, in the context of the program, not “us”, but “them”, or at most, a sort of intermediary between these two groups.

The same happens when host Mikko Liimatainen first introduces guest Makwan Amirkhani. Host Liimatainen says:

“Today we have also discussed these group harassment suspicions and so on, young asylum seeker men are primarily suspected – what would you say to this, since you also have, as a young man, come to Finland – how could we help these youths to enter this society?”

Amirkhani has lived in Finland since 1993 (Tammilehto in Yle news, 2015), but he, like Al-Hello, is invited to discuss the affairs of current asylum seekers. This creates an image of him as a kind of an authority representing the wide phenomenon called “refugees”, “asylum seekers” or “young men”. The way Liimatainen reminds the audience that Amirkhani, too, came to Finland as a young man, and juxtaposing this with suspicions of group harassment by new asylum seekers, connects Amirkhani from his current position back to his “roots”, otherness, and refugee status. He is given the chance to be an example of a good immigrant who has managed to enter Finnish society and to become a part of it.

Naturally, the parts I have picked here concerning this division to analyse do not represent the entire broadcast. It is not in every statement that the hosts made this distinction between the Finns and asylum seekers, and there were moments where they brought into limelight the immense suffering of asylum seekers by, for example, showing a video clip with an interview of a Syrian man. Another part of the programme showed the leader of an asylum seeker shelter speak about how the newcomers will have a positive effect to Finnish economy, a point that one of the hosts helped the speaker to make during the show.

Nevertheless, even these examples where asylum seekers are spoken of in a positive light are still emphasizing the fact that they are a *different group* from an imaginary “us” – whether they are here to pose a threat, as believed by some in the studio, or to give us an economic boost, a belief shared by others. Therefore, what is noteworthy is that the polarizing effects and language use described above (the us vs. them –setting) are present in the broadcast, and whether they are balanced out by possible positive ideological statements by the hosts is subject to question. As the core aspect of polarization is a setting where groups of people cluster around separate, distant poles (see Esteban and Schneider 2008), this juxtaposition of “us” and “them” is, to me, an indicator of how journalism can make choices that widen this gap between groups.

#### *The fifth sub-frame: ridding ourselves from fears*

The fifth sub-frame I identified is to do with ridding ourselves from fears, a premise which was cemented already in the opening lines of the show, as referred earlier. This frame has already been somewhat covered as it is included in the frame of insecurity, but I have added some additional notes about the prominence of this frame through the broadcast in this chapter.

The fear-frame is dominant throughout the show, as indicated by the hosts suggesting the street patrols as one potential source of fear, the asylum seekers as another (see first two sub-frames).

This promotes the separation of “us” and “them”, as Van Dijk has conceptualized (see Ramanathan and Tan 2015) and influences the frame through which we perceive other groups of people. Fear is, naturally, a negative emotion, and I infer that constantly attributing a sense of fear into either asylum seekers or street patrols, regardless of good or bad intentions by the hosts, upkeeps an association of negativity towards these groups of people. It also makes the dominant frame of insecurity much more salient (see Entman 1993) by repetition of the fear-frame. Thus, the hosts use the framing devices of defining the problems as (fear) as well as diagnosing their causes (asylum seekers and/ or street patrols) (see Entman 1993, 52) to further instil the insecure emotions that are at play in the division of opinion. Fear of atrocities and perceptions about the other, as discussed by Collins (2012), are some of the emotions that are related to polarization. Thus, I propose that by up-keeping the idea of different groups of people being the source of fears, the hosts are also turning the conversation into one about emotions rather than facts.

This fifth sub-frame of ridding ourselves of these fears was identifiable as hosts attempted to solve the issue by asking the guests for concrete solutions about the matter. As a journalistic choice, one concrete example of facing personal fears was the hosts suggesting Hassinen to go and visit an asylum seeker shelter (an offer she declined). A more prominent example of the hosts attempting to bridge a gap between asylum seekers and Finns drawing closer together was inviting another surprise guest, senior citizen Linnéa Mynttinen and her helper, an asylum seeker Ali Kamil Al-Sammaraie, who appeared as rather devoted friends. Here, host Damström asked Al-Sammaraie about fears targeted towards asylum seekers, which was the only time a person representing asylum seekers spoke on the broadcast as prompted by the hosts. The second time when Al-Sammaraie spoke in the show was as a request of Mrs. Mynttinen.

The effect of bridging the gap here was somewhat diminished by the fact that Al-Sammaraie was asked about the fact that some people might see him as a “stranger” and advice children not to talk to strangers. To choose to represent person in such a way is, yet again, an example of Van Dijk’s notions about an ideology including an “us vs. them” thinking (see Ramanathan and Tan 2015), and shows how this ideology penetrates the broadcast. Al-Sammaraie was not, for instance, asked about whether he fears anything in Finland, but was phrased as a “stranger”, which serves as an alienating feature between him and the rest of the studio guests. This intertwines with previous notions about how clustering people into different groups is an integral part of polarization (see Esteban and Schneider 2008). However, as a final note, it should be remarked that choosing Mynttinen and Al-Sammaraie in the guest selection shows that the hosts had made an effort in



promoting an example where fears had been overcome by cooperation between a Finn and an immigrant.

*The sixth sub-frame: Finland as divided into opinion groups*

The sixth frame introduced by the hosts is the frame of Finland being divided into groups, regarding the nation's attitude towards, for example, asylum seekers or street patrols. The hosts also addressed division in general without specifying the division groups. Some of these cases were very mild in phrasing, such as mentioning how some are worried about asylum seekers and "the other side" is worried about street patrols, thus casually suggesting that there are two different groups in the discussion. Some of these cases were much stronger in phrasing, where the hosts directly said how there appears to be different opinion groups in Finland, or that Finland as a nation appears to be dividing in half.

This sub-frame entails the whole question of polarization and is perhaps the one that needs the most analysis. Starting already from the guest list, it became apparent that the four people with an immigrant background who were invited to the show were there to represent "foreignness" (see the fourth sub-frame). It is interesting to think about how the dynamics of the program would have shifted if, say, half of the guests were asylum seekers. Since the guest list itself is by far one of the most noteworthy aspects of the show, I argue that as a journalistic choice, it had a great impact in the outcome of the broadcast.

The way these "non-Finnish" guests were represented shows that the premise of the broadcast subscribes to Van Dijk's example of an ideology that emphasizes a structure of separating "us" and "them", where "us" is something positive and compulsory to pursue, and "them" shows as negative and something that must be shed (Ramanathan and Tan 2015, 59–60). Most the statements made by the "non-Finnish" guests were concerned with them answering questions or making statements based on their position as a "non-Finn". They were asked about, for example, integration, or the state of Muslim women in Finland, and in some cases, they also voluntarily made statements about similar matters. The overall picture in these cases was that it is worthy of pursuit to become more Finnish and more integrated – thus representing Finnishness as a positive attribute.

Concerning addressing polarization verbally, I counted that the hosts addressed or mentioned polarization or Finnish nation being torn in half in different ways eight times during the show. This, I argue, is an evidence of a pre-supposed frame given by the hosts and the producers of the show. In these cases, the hosts themselves initiated the theme of polarization in Finland, as either

a transition from one topic to another, or as an independent question to either an individual guest or the studio at large. I argue that this is a clear indicator of the show having a script, the premise of which is that there is a polarization in Finland, regardless of which groups the polarization entails (be it those for or against asylum seekers, street patrols, multiculturalism or other similar matters). The existence of a script and a pre-supposed frame means that this script is likely to have directed the choices of the journalists during the show as well as tinted the program towards introducing Finland as polarized.

It is noteworthy that in at least three cases, some of the guests challenged the notion of polarization, whereas one guest defended the notion of there being polar opposites of opinion in Finland. Towards the end of the show, when one guest challenged the notion of Finland being divided by saying that the polarization appears to have lessened from last October (2015), the hosts as well as the other studio guests seemed to agree with this notion. The whole context then appears to indicate that the broadcast had been scripted as showing Finland as polarized initially, and ending with softening this claim. However, the dominant frame in the show remains as exploring Finland as polarized, as the softening of this claim happened only in the very last minutes of the broadcast, and even then was initiated by a guest rather than the hosts.

I identify this pre-supposed sub-frame of a polarized Finland as an example of a thematic structure, described by Pan and Kosicki as a news structure that features an issue and different angles to cover it as well as a hypothesis of how things are. This hypothesis is then tested by different sources and propositions, which “function as a logical support for the hypothesis”. (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 60). I propose that the hypothesis of this broadcast was pre-established as insecurity and a division of the Finnish nation, which was manifested in, for example, the eight repetitions of the division-thematic, as well as the initial dominant frame of insecurity, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

Another reason for this repetition of a frame can be identified using Scheufele’s findings. Scheufele has compiled many remarks about what factors impact the framing of a story (Scheufele 1999, 109–110) and takes up five factors that “may potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue”. They are “social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of journalists (e.g., Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978”. (Scheufele 1999, 109). Of these factors, I believe the prominent factors that influenced A2-ilta are journalistic convention as well as social norms and values. It is evident that the producers and hosts of the show had identified an existing issue of a level of polarization in the Finnish society and decided to address it in their broadcast. Pan and Kosicki note:

“The domain in which the news discourse operates consists of shared beliefs about a society. These beliefs, despite the elusive nature of their content, are known to and accepted by a majority of the society as common sense or conventional wisdom--- (...) They are pervasive and are often taken for granted. They set the parameters of a broad framework within which news discourse is constructed, transmitted, and developed.” (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 57).

Polarization appears, in the light of this quotation, as one of these “common sense” notions, a shared belief that has been picked up by the media and addressed in the A2-iltä broadcast. What is noteworthy is that the guests did not always subscribe to this frame of a polarized nation, yet the hosts kept with it. At one point, chancellor Nerg (one of the guests) pointed out that she no longer shared the view of such a strong polarization which was present “around October-November” [of 2015]. Many in the audience reacted positively to this, and even host Damström seemed to agree by saying “Indeed.”

At the very end of the broadcast, the hosts pose the question of whether the broadcast taught “us Finns” about how to discuss these matters. This can be interpreted as one way of the hosts attempting to reduce division, and indeed at least one of the guests felt the evening had been useful in this regard. However, I argue that this short attempt at reducing division does not balance out the eight other times that polarization in Finnish society was brought up by the hosts, making the frame of division much more salient than reconciliation.

In addition, in two statements, the hosts directly labelled two groups of opinions. Amongst the eight times polarization was referred to there were also cases where the polarization groups were not labelled, and in these cases, the hosts merely referred to there being “inflamed relationships” involved in the general discussion, or simply by asking, “how do we find common understanding between us?”. In the two cases where the groups of opinions were identified, the first one featured host Annika Damström saying:

“Well, many have said, ‘okay, we are maybe scared of asylum seekers’, but the other side finds street patrols worrying. How do you respond to this fear?”

In this statement, the two sides are those who fear asylum seekers and those who worry about street patrols. The context of this statement is Damström interviewing a member of one street patrol, Jari-Pekka Teurajärvi of the Street Hawks from Oulu. In another statement, host Damström, speaking to guest Linnéa Mynttinen, labels the polar opposites as follows:

“Linnéa, we appear to have in Finland two groups now, those who, um, welcome... the asylum seekers, and then there are those who say, we do not need more [of them] here or we do not have the possibilities to take them in, of

course to there is a large group who fits in between here, but these two groups and opinions can also be found, so how do we get these two groups to understand each other now?”

This statement contains an interesting point: Damström seems to soften her claim of two polar opposites by pointing out that there is, “of course”, a large group between these two opinions of those who welcome asylum seekers and those who are not keen in welcoming more of them. In this context, I feel it is probable that the hosts are aware of the critique of simplifying the conversation into merely two poles. The good aspect of this softening is that it adds some grey area between the extremes.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the hosts labelled the polarized groups in these examples, and the mere naming of groups is a powerful framing device. The power of journalism to pick certain aspects of reality over others and make those aspects more salient is a prominent example of how the media can depict our reality through these choices. Labelling exercises journalistic power of selection, since these groups are not founded in any particular research, statistic or observation, but rather their existence is presented as fact during the show.

In conclusion, I propose that the frame of Finland dividing in half is the most salient sub-frame in A2-ilta, and can thus promote the idea of Finland as a polarized nation, albeit this hypothesis (see Pan and Kosicki’s thematic structure, 1993) was, in the end, somewhat opposed by the guests. Be that as it may, this frame was most connected to the hosts’ own choices of words, manifested by the repetition of this frame, which was analysed earlier in this sub-chapter. It is an example of how journalists define a problem (polarization) and suggest remedies to it (by various examples in the studio conversation) (see Entman 1993, 52), and in doing so, frame our reality accordingly. Labelling different opinion groups makes this frame even more concrete, as the journalists thus suggest that the opinion groups do exist and do not agree with each other, even if the purpose of the broadcast was to bring these groups closer together. The presence of a thematic structure assuming polarization is clear throughout the show, and promotes, in my opinion, a vision of Finland that is fractured and features different opinion groups. Whether or not this depiction is an accurate representation of reality, the power of the media lies in its ability to increase the salience of such a frame and to amplify it. As polarization includes the notion of different groups who are clustering far away from each other, I argue that increasing a frame of a divided nation is directly connected to a more fragmented representation of the Finnish society.

*The seventh sub-frame – costs of asylum seekers – and a summary*

The seventh sub-frame regarding the costs of asylum seekers and division of available jobs between Finns and asylum seekers is perhaps the least dominating one in the A2-ilta broadcast. Hence, the analysis of this frame is very concise.

The frame was brought into conversation not by the hosts, but by some of the guests, from where the hosts picked this notion up for further discussion. In this case, the hosts resorted to mainly asking the politicians and other experts present for answers about the “fact” that immigration “costs quite a lot” (words by host Damström). The discussion was handled rather neutrally by the hosts, except in one case where one of the guests (Sari Hassinen) expressed her anger over cutting money from senior citizens and people with families, and the host (Damström) then asked her if this was something that could “tear the nation up”. In short, this is another example of how the thematic structure (see Pan and Kosicki 1993) of the broadcast is visible by the hosts attaching the frame of a division amongst Finns to Hassinen’s statement, and as such serves as an example of the penetrative nature of that frame.

In sum, I argue that by examining the hosts’ role in A2-ilta, their statements clearly showed a thematic script that assumed Finland to be divided and polarized, and used journalistic power to label those groups who are a part of this division. It made this representation of reality salient (see Entman 1993), by, for example, repeating the frame of division, thus directly affecting the framework through which we read our reality. The show also simplified the range of opinions related to polarization. What was missing is, for example, was the *amount* of people representing different opinions in society. In the studio setting, each opinion seemed as weighty as the other, and this setting turned the spectrum of opinions into a simplified version of reality.

A2-ilta displayed a clear ideology of separating people into two groups, of “Us”, Finns, and “Them”, the asylum seekers. The presence of such an ideology is an important ingredient of polarization, which, by definition, is a situation where people are clustered into groups with internal homogeneity and heterogeneity between the groups (Esteban and Ray, 1994, 819). This segregation, thus, directly promotes a view of society that is based on division.

By naming some of the groups of opposing opinions, even if in a moderate manner, the hosts took part in reifying the polarization of opinions by identifying some of the groups in question. The act of labelling groups of differing opinions may serve as an influence for people to pick those groups who they identify with from the offered selection, as people tend to choose as allies those who think similarly as themselves (Buskens, Cortens and Weesie 2008, 206). Thus, the hosts’ labelling

can promote isolation between groups and homogeneity within groups – in short, the ingredients that are necessary to polarization (see Esteban and Schneider 2008).

Finally, the A2-ilta broadcast put a lot of emphasis into polarization being solved by people in their own attitudes, exemplified by the numerous requests of the hosts Liimatainen and Damström to the guests to give their answers to the “solution”, to get rid of our fears. The broadcast therefore failed to bring into account the impact of, for example, politics and political debate into polarization, even though there were politicians present in the interview. The show reduced the issue into a case of attitudes and fears of citizens, and made polarization to be something that we as a nation should address in our own behaviour rather than attempt to, for example, solve politically. The issue with this is that “people tend to choose their friends among those who behave and think in a similar way to themselves---“ (Buskens, Cortens and Weesie 2008, 206). Therefore, by focusing on a personal sense of insecurity, the A2-ilta broadcast may have made it easier for people to simply stick to those opinions in the show that reinforce their already existing framework.

## **5.5. Key event no.5: The death of a bystander by a neo-Nazi**

### *5.5.1. Background*

The final key event I chose for this thesis concerns with the death of a 28-year-old man, Jimi Karttunen, who was assaulted during a demonstration by the National Socialist Suomen Vastarintaliike –group’s demonstration (Blencowe in Yle news, 2016). The assault took place on September 10<sup>th</sup> 2016, and the assaulter was a member and one of the founders of Suomen Vastarintaliike (Happonen in Yle news, 2016). According to the head of investigation on the matter, the victim had walked up to one of the men carrying the flag of Vastarintaliike and spat in front of him. After “some words” were exchanged, the assaulter, Jesse Torniainen, ran towards the victim and kicked him in the chest. Karttunen died a bit less than a week later because of an injury to the skull. (Blencowe in Yle news, 2016). In December 2016, the verdict for Jesse Torniainen was revealed to be two years of imprisonment for assault (Mölsä in Yle news, 2016).

During the four or so months between the assault, the discharge of Karttunen from the hospital, his following death later, and the verdict of Torniainen, the discussion about the case in the media and politics was active. The number of articles that mention the case in any length amassed to 60 between August and December 2016, which serves to prove that the case was rapidly and extensively covered and/or mentioned by Yle. As with the cases of Immonen’s Facebook post and the street patrols, not each article selected for this case deals exclusively with the attack and its

immediate aftermath per se. This batch of articles includes any news between October and December 2016 that mentions, even briefly, the assault in its context.

The range of articles is large: for example, a former member and founder of Suomen Vastarintaliike gave a few interviews about the matter, sharing his views and discussing his abandoning of the ideology and now working for a project to prevent radicalization (Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016). In some towns, people organized marches against “racism and fascism” because of the abuse case (Malinen in Yle news, 2016). Some politicians discussed the banning of Suomen Vastarintaliike (Juuti in Yle news, 2016), and the matter was taken up by the government (Korkki in Yle news, 2016) and discussed rather extensively in numerous articles. The extensive discussion on radical groups and their status reached a milestone in March of 2017, when the police administration of Finland filed a lawsuit to Pirkanmaa municipal court demanding the banning of “the neo-Nazi group” Vastarintaliike (Virkkunen in Yle news, 2017). The main value of this event is that it draws connections between some of the previous key events in this thesis, and these are the points I have focused upon in this analysis.

#### *5.5.2. Analysing the most read and the most shared articles*

In the case of the death of Jimi Karttunen, the most read and shared article are two different news pieces. Neither article deals exclusively with the assault case itself, but both articles are connected to the case nonetheless. The most read article is titled “7 things you should know about Finnish neo-Nazis” (“7 asiaa, jotka sinun olisi hyvä tietää suomalaisista uusnatseista”) (Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016). If one stays true to the original phrasing of the headline and pays less attention to grammatical structure, the headline more accurately says: “7 things it would be good for you to know about Finnish neo-Nazis”. It had gathered 65 941 page views (by June 13<sup>th</sup> 2017). As the headline suggests, it is a story that sheds light to Suomen Vastarintaliike (henceforth SVL) and their ideology, while mentioning the assault case in Helsinki’s railway square in a list of crimes or violent acts done by the group. In this article, the assault is mentioned merely in one sentence. The worth of the article is in that it gives the assault a wider frame than just a one-time incident, bringing forward the ideological roots of SVL and thus giving the assault case more weight.

In the case of this article, I find that analysing the headline is redundant, as it does not contain any particularly polarizing frames. It simply calls neo-Nazis for what they are, and indicates a frame that suggests reading the article would be useful. The lead of the story, another strong

syntactical framing device (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 59), somewhat adds to the monolithic frame of Nazism that is the dominating feature of the headline. According to the lead, SVL cherishes Finnish nature, is in favour of a racist doctrines and spreads their message through MV-magazine – incidentally, the same magazine relates to S.O.O. in key event 2. The connection made with MV-magazine connects this article and its frame into a much wider discussion about the publication and readership of the said magazine. It makes use of word connotations (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32) by saying that SVL “spreads” their messages through the magazine, indicating that by reading the publication, one might also be involved in reading neo-Nazi propaganda. MV-magazine has been called “anti-immigrant”, but on the other hand, its most popular three stories have been read about 160 000 times and shared over 20 000 times on Facebook (Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2015). Connecting MV-magazine and neo-Nazis together places a question to a lot of Finns who do read the magazine: are you reading a subscription that has connections to neo-Nazis?

The article uses seven subheads and paragraphs to explain seven facts about SVL. One of the paragraphs deals with the violent nature of SVL, thus briefly mentioning the incident leading to a death in Asema-aukio in September 2016. In this article, the act of violence is mentioned in connection with a list of other crimes done by the members of SVL both in Finland as well as in their Swedish branch. This list of examples of crimes and other offenses by SVL provided in the article is, I suggest, an example of a type of framing that Entman describes as follows: “The *text* contains frames, which are manifested by (...) sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments.” (Entman 1993, 52). I interpret that the list of examples provided by the journalist in the article form the “thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” which serve to further instil the frame of SVL as a dangerous organisation, capable of violence.

The sixth subhead and paragraph contains some of the most noteworthy points of the article with regards to this thesis. The paragraph directly links S.O.O. with SVL as well as ties together the persona of Olli Immonen into the case. Firstly, the paragraph states that the anti-immigrant propaganda spread by SVL has found support in S.O.O. members, who distribute the neo-Nazi’s bulletin through their Facebook-pages. Furthermore, the founder of S.O.O. is also a member of SVL, and even though not all members of S.O.O. are unanimous about neo-Nazism, the links and sympathies to the SVL ideology are obvious (Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016). This juxtaposition gives the impression that whatever support some Finns have given to S.O.O. thus far is now, in the light of this information, linked to neo-Nazi action. It calls to mind the questionnaires Yle sent to different politicians about street patrols in key event 2, while mentioning S.O.O. as “fanatically patriotic”, and



asking whether the politicians accept street patrols (Partio in Yle news, 2016; Väinämö in Yle news, 2016; Koskinen in Yle news, 2016).

This link between the neo-Nazis and S.O.O. unearthed by the journalist for this article makes the polarization between accepting and disowning (racist) street patrols even starker. As polarization features the trait of a within-group identity and alienation across groups (Esteban and Ray 1994, as quoted in Esteban and Schneider 2008, 132), I suggest that the more alienating the attributes are across groups, the bigger the polarization. In this case, taking Esteban and Ray's example of measuring polarization through a distribution of attributes (Esteban and Ray, 1994), I argue that attributing S.O.O. with neo-Nazi associations is a very strong polarizing attribute. Thus, this article is linked to the second key event concerning street patrols, showing the effect of polarization as a holistic circle, the effects of which can be picked from different media content across the line.

Furthermore, the link between this event and the case of Olli Immonen becomes evident in the article. The article states that some SVL members have connections to the members of Suomen Sisu, an organisation which Olli Immonen chairs (Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016). The Facebook-post itself is not mentioned in this article, but as Immonen is at the centre of the Facebook-case, the association between him and SVL become are strong enough to connect the first key event to this last key event.

As Machin and Mayr point out, there is “no neutral way to represent a person” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 77). Even though the article “7 things you should know about Finnish neo-Nazis” contains many critical notions about SVL, I deem the most prominent parts of the article text to be the ones handling Immonen and links to other street patrols. These, I suggest, are the most relevant parts concerning polarization. Naming Immonen and the S.O.O. in the article are the ingredients that link the SVL-criticism of this article with the supporters of Immonen and S.O.O., thus widening the group whom the criticism includes.

The article reminds the readers that Immonen, before his Facebook-post case, was related to another sensation where he posed in a picture with a group of people, some of whom were members of SVL. The article also points out that some members of the nationalistic organisation Suomen Sisu have connections with SVL. Mentioning that Olli Immonen is the chairman of Suomen Sisu is using the device of functionalisation him, i.e. he is “being depicted in terms” of what he does (Machin and Mayr 2012, 81), as the chairman of Suomen Sisu. Functionalisation can, according to critical discourse analysis, “connote legitimacy” to a person (ibid.). I suggest that in this case, naming

Immonen in specific as an example of a person with possible connections to SVL and reminding the audience of his position as the chairman of a nationalistic organisation gives much more weight to the frames that his persona already has, based on the analysis of the first key event. As further evidence to this, I relate to an article written the day after this one concerning this event, which features an interview with Prime Minister Sipilä, who notes that while he does not know the connections of different MPs to extreme organisations, he believes MPs should not have those kinds of ties (Valtonen in Yle news, 2016).

Thus, I suggest that this most read article is a link that adds to the spectrums of polarization of the first and second key event. It does so by adding attributes to the spectrum of for and against Immonen's ideology by bringing into light the attribute of connotations to neo-Nazism. The same happens in relation to the spectrum of the second key event, in which case the S.O.O. is now also imbued with the attribute of connections to a group with National Socialistic ideals. These attributes can be interpreted as extremist ideologies, thus widening gaps of opinions regarding street patrols and Immonen.

The most shared article of this event bears the headline: "The police wants to found a unit concentrating on online hate speech: "[People] imagine that one can say anything on the internet" ("Poliisi haluaa perustaa verkon vihapuheeseen keskittyvän yksikön: 'Kuvitellaan, että netissä voi laukoa ihan mitä vaan'") (Gertsch and Orjala in Yle news, 2016). It has been shared about 4170 times (by June 13<sup>th</sup> 2017). As with the most read article, the case of the death on Asema-aukio is mentioned only briefly in this news piece. However, it is mentioned in the general frame of increased hate speech, the frame of the headline. The headline makes use of functionalization, a device identified in critical discourse analysis (Machin and Mayr 2012, 81). To start a headline with the word "the police" immediately connotes legitimacy (ibid.) and authority to whatever is being said next. Furthermore, the use of impersonalisation can be recognized in the headline: instead of referring to some individual police or naming anyone, the term "the police" is used. This means it is "not just a particular person but a whole institution" who is behind the statement. (Machin and Mayr 2012, 79–80). This gives the article's content an extra note of authority and, I infer, might make its frame weightier.

Based on the headline, the primary frame of the article is that hate speech is a current issue, to the point that the police would like to establish a unit to focus on the issue. The lead, then, offers the name of the policeman who is the main speaker and actor of the news story (see Van Dijk 1987, 19). The lead states: "The director-general of the police Seppo Kolehmainen gives a reminder

that one can be held criminally responsible also for hate speech on social media.” (“Poliisiylijohtaja Seppo Kolehmainen muistuttaa, että myös sosiaalisen median vihapuheista voi joutua rikosvastuuseen.”) (Gertsch and Orjala in Yle news, 2016). As with the headline, the use of a title (director-general of the police) here instils an authority to what is being said, and further illuminates the frame that online hate speech, especially in social media, seems to have reached such levels as to get the police involved.

In this article, the police – through the voice of director-general of the police Kolehmainen – expresses their concern about online hate speech that has “completely gone out of hand” (Gertsch and Orjala in Yle news, 2016). This concern over hate speech spilling overboard is the same concern given by the editor-in-chief of MTV news in key event 3, the closing of audience comment sections by certain media. Thus, another link between two events that span over the course of the time analysed in this thesis is forged between these events. The point of view of this article is mainly that of what Kolehmainen offers (see Van Dijk 1987, 19), which is criticism towards the behaviour the police has witnessed in online discussions.

The part that ties with the death of Jimi Karttunen is in the first half of the article, and it is strongly tied with the frame of hate speech. The journalist has selected to write the article using two themes: the first part of the article deals with online hate speech, but the second half discusses violence, the death case and extreme groups as well as hate speech all together. The latter part of the article thus connects the death of Jimi Karttunen into such frames as extreme groups, increase of hate speech and “a tightening atmosphere”, a phrasing attributed to Kolehmainen in the article.

What I find notable in terms of polarization is how the article links hate speech and violence together. The frame of hate speech running out of hands combined with a concrete example such as the death on Asema-aukio is a very sobering juxtaposition that reveals an emergent message in the article: hate speech can escalate, and even the police is worried about it. The use of an authority figure such as the police and mentioning a politician later in the article use both impersonalisation (“the police”) (see Mayr and Machin 2012, 79–80) and functionalization (use of official titles to connote legitimacy; see Mayr and Machin 2012, 81) to instil a note of authority and seriousness to the situation. I argue that this together with the frame of hate speech being a specific concern for the police instils a note of urgency in the matter. It is also noteworthy that the director-general of the police Kolehmainen is almost the sole source of the entire article (see Van Dijk 1987, 19). Only one brief mention is made to one politician’s statement about hate speech, and even this part is paraphrased rather than quoted directly. In other words, Kolehmainen gets to speak freely, and, it could be argued, is his concern (which is also the police’s concern) that is the agenda of the article.

When Kolehmainen says that hate speech has gone out of hand, nothing in the article suggests that this notion has been questioned: the source is, in other words, legitimized in the article by the sheer fact that the director-general of the police is not asked to ground his arguments (see Van Dijk 1987, 19). Since he is not questioned, the impression is that he must, therefore, be right. Thus, the view on matters that he channels through this news article becomes a description of how things are in reality.

Because quotations are an active form of the writer's control over the material (Jullian 2011, 769, referring to Scollon 1998), the journalist has decided to let Kolehmainen's concerns to be the agenda of the article and used his quotations as the main source. Thus, Kolehmainen gets to channel his concern of increased hate speech rather freely. In doing so, he paints a picture of reality that sounds very polarized. Kolehmainen has been quoted as saying that hate speech in social media has gone completely out of hand, and that hate speech is one step towards physical violence. Incidentally, physical violence is also the fourth step on a conflict escalation scale, right after polarization (Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 13). I therefore conclude that this article is disseminating a view of reality that depicts Finland with a polarized atmosphere – as indicated by the salience in hate speech and the operation of extremist movements mentioned in the article.

By looking at the rest of the articles selected for this case, I identified a frame linking the Finns party with extremist groups, which is highlighted in some of the articles in this key event (e.g. Valtonen in Yle news, 2016; Koivisto in Yle news, 2016; Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016). By connecting the Finns party to extremist movements, the articles add this link as an attribute to the Finns party. This attribute, I argue, can serve as a distancing factor that makes the gap between those supporting the Finns party even wider to the pole that features their opponents, thus potentially contributing a polarization of opinion (see Esteban and Ray 1994).

There are six articles in the batch of 60 that connect the Finns party into ultra-right wing or extremist movements in different ways. One of them merely quotes a Finns party politician about the matter, because the leader of the Finns party Timo Soini himself had pondered on investigating his party's connections to extreme movements (Koivisto in Yle news, 2016). The rest of the five articles, however, feature clear editorial choices by the journalists mentioning the fact that the Finns party has these connections.

One article that shows a particularly strong frame against the Finns party is a news piece where an Yle journalist has interviewed an expert to comment on numbers measuring political parties' endorsement (a measurement ordered by Yle). In this article, the expert links the assault in Asemakatu with the halt in the Finns party's growing popularity, stating that since the party has been

connected to extreme groups, it cannot but be reflected in the popularity of the party. (Säävälä in Yle news, 2016). Since the frame of the article is selected as extreme movements in relation to Finns party and not just analysing poll numbers, I argue that this is an example of the presence of an ideological choice by the journalist, exemplified by them choosing these specific quotations of the interviewee (the expert). As Jullian points out, the ideological choices of the journalist can emerge, since they are the ones who decide the sources, the frame, the way things are presented, and so on (Jullian 2011, 767). Jullian calls this tinting the story “in such a way that the readers get the desired view”, without the journalist having to commit themselves too strongly to the perspective offered by the interviewees (ibid.) I suggest this is the device that is at play in this article, which then promotes the connotation between the Finns party and extremist groups. The connotation, also called “meaning potential” by Machin and Mayr (2012, 51), makes use of selecting to highlight the Finns party connections to extremist groups, thus cementing an association between the groups. It does so by, for example, lexical choices in the headline which state that a researcher has announced: “the deeds of extremist organisations take away support from the Finns party”. Indicating that a researcher has uttered this opinion gives the notion a sense of authority. The words about “taking away” support are a choice that indicate that the journalist has wished to highlight the diminishment of party endorsement of the true Finns due to their links to extreme groups (see Machin and Mayr 2012, 51). This can have impacts on polarization, as extremism becomes an attribute that is now attached to the Finns party, thus bringing them ideologically closer to an extreme pole (see Esteban and Ray 1994).

The other articles are not bringing forward the connection between the Finns party and extremist groups as strongly, but resort to mentioning it nonetheless in the body text. In some cases, the context is asking a politician to comment on the connections (Valtonen in Yle news, 2016), whereas in some cases, the connections of Finns party politicians and neo-Nazis or other “immigrant-opposing groups” are mentioned (e.g. Mäntymaa in Yle news, 2016), such as in the most shared article that was covered before. Thus, even if the number of six articles mentioning the connection feels like a low number, the salience of the thematic of connecting extremism and the Finns party together can be said to be present in the coverage of this event.

In sum, I put forward that the major value of this event and the batch of articles representing it is in their connections to the previous events of this thesis as well as adding a polarizing attribute of links to extremism to the Finns party. Hate speech, street patrols and politicians discussing extreme movements all merge in this event in a way that was unprecedented at the start of this research. Many of the articles concerning this event mirror the same themes that have been present throughout this

thesis: marches promoting hastier reactions to racism began during this key event (Niinistö in Yle news, 2016); numerous politicians were interviewed to let them take a stand concerning the banning or legality of extreme groups (e.g. Niinistö in Yle news, 2016; Tiihonen in Yle news, 2016; Juuti in Yle news, 2016); the Finns party is, again, linked to the events (Koivisto in Yle news, 2016); and the issue of hate speech as well as street patrols is in the limelight. I conclude that the repetition of similar frames from one event to the other, and particularly the connections between the first event, the fourth event and this last one, are evidence that Yle does indeed seem to produce articles which contain recurring frames.

## 6. Findings and discussion

In this chapter, I will present the main findings of this thesis based on the analysis of the key events. The articles that this thesis has referred to can be found in the Bibliography, and additional figures are in the Appendix. I will first address the findings that are directly related to the research questions, and address other additional findings that emerged from the analysis later in this chapter. I will also address some limitations of my own work, and towards the end, form a synthesis of some of the key findings with the theory of conflict escalation in relation to polarization.

On a general level, I found that Yle's contribution to polarization was somewhat subtler than I expected in terms of lexical choices and wordings, but unexpected in terms of the volume of certain frames. The surprise in the subtlety of word choices is perhaps due to the fact that most of the previous media and polarization research seems to be concerned with partisan media, such as in the United States. However, I was also interested to find that despite their more neutral than expected style of reporting, Yle did portray leanings to certain frames and journalistic choices that can be seen to have a role in polarization.

Firstly, regarding the relationship of media and polarization, I found that Yle, at least outwardly, appears to be a neutral media throughout the events that were analysed. There were very few times that the opinion of the journalist could be argued to show in any article, thus making finding their specific role in polarization challenging. What I found was that Yle's niche is not so much in the ideological or otherwise blatantly coloured representation of reality, but in the surprising volume of frame repetition they offer. This notion about frame salience was well in line with the tools I used from media framing theory and CDA, and sits well with previous information about frame salience.

The volume of frames became clear already in analysing the Immonen-case (key event 1), and it was re-established particularly in analysing the coverage about street patrols (key event 2). I found that despite Yle's neutral exterior, the sheer repetition of frames turned them dominant, thus effecting the neutrality of the coverage. The repetition of frames can be partly explained by the fact that each Yle branch, in my experience as a journalist, works rather independently in producing articles. If this is the explanation of frame repetition, it then raises the question of whether there is a collective ideology amongst Yle's reporters that would explain the re-emergence of similar frames (such as asking politicians about their opinion about certain issues) all around Yle branches in Finland. I believe repetitive frames might serve to expose that journalists can have strong, pre-existing cognitions about different events which emerge when news stories are written in an automatic news convention.

The volume of Yle articles makes their role in distributing polarizing frames significant. This is especially noticeable as I found Yle relies a lot on quotations of the interviewees in their articles. As I have no other media to compare with in this research, I cannot say whether Yle uses quotations abnormally much or the usual amount, but I put forward that Yle might be vulnerable to letting the interviewees' agenda easily through by relying in citations to carry the article. And, even in relying on the interviewees' quotations, Yle is exercising journalistic power in choosing who gets to speak and about which matters. This thesis therefore finds it noteworthy how powerful the media can be in directing how we view our social reality.

Both the repetition of frames as well as Yle's tendency to let the interviewees speak freely were especially manifest in key event 4, the A2-ilta broadcast. The hosts were careful not to voice any clearly opinionated content themselves. Despite this, I found that Yle had scripted the broadcast with the assumption that there are certain kinds of polarization in the Finnish society, and they repeated this frame in their narrative several times during the show. They also took the liberty of naming certain opinion groups, which I found to be a case of Yle introducing their own, journalistic frame to the audience. In cases such as this I found that the use of journalistic power can be surprisingly subtle and not easily noticeable, which makes it elusive but important to research.

Secondly, regarding the main findings of each event, the primary observation I made was that the media frames between the events seemed to make a full circle towards the end of this thesis. In two of the events, events 1 and 2, I noticed that Yle's need to define opinions "for" and "against" the issues at hand was so strong that they started conducting questionnaires to politicians. In key events

3 and 5, I found that the concept of escalating hate speech was dominant in both cases, albeit this frame came about through the interviewees.

In the key events of Olli Immonen's Facebook-post and the emergence of street patrols (key events 1 and 2, respectively), the noticeable issue concerning polarization was the salience of a news routine that actively searches for opposite views on the subjects. It became evident that Yle was birthing the view of a division of opinion in the way they pursued opinions from politicians and, in some cases, framed the situation as polarized, as manifested by some of the headlines featured. This finding shows that in some cases, the media is not necessarily merely channelling an already existing polarization, but also taking part in fuelling aspects of it.

By manifestly finding the two opposite ends of opinion in a matter, Yle fell into feeding a spectrum of polarized opinions. As polarization is the third step in conflict escalation (Rambotsham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011, 13), I find this observation noteworthy. The first two steps before this are difference and contradiction, of which the latter one "may or may not remain latent" (ibid.). I present as a finding the fact that Yle has, despite being a rather neutral and subtle media, partaken in making an existing contradiction in society from latent to manifest through their dominant frames of "for" and "against" certain phenomenon in Finnish society (such as Immonen's ideology and street patrols). Furthermore, Esteban and Schneider remark that "various forms of polarization" increase the risk of violent conflict, both within the society as well as between nation states (Esteban and Schneider 2008, 131). I find it significant that even when observing a non-partisan state media such as Yle, certain frames can be found that seem to display a polarizing view of the society. Therefore, this thesis states that even if the media in question is subtler than, say, partisan media might be, their role in polarization is not entirely omitted.

One of the most important findings of this thesis is the amalgamation of the concepts of multiculturalism, asylum seekers, immigration and polarization in the media. Before studying the data for this research, I assumed that these concepts would be reasonably straightforward to analyse and operationalize, and that they would be covered in the media in clear and accurate ways. What I found instead was that these concepts were in constant flux in the data that I used, and each concept bore so many connotations that it became extremely challenging to concentrate on the original research questions. Hence, during the writing of the thesis, the original research question changed from just researching polarization regarding the asylum seeker crisis, to polarization regarding the asylum seeker crisis as well as the multiculturalism debate. Especially in analysing the first key event of Olli Immonen's Facebook-post, I discovered that what I thought was a debate on asylum seekers



was, in fact, a debate on multiculturalism that *became* an issue *with connotations* to the asylum seeker crisis as well as immigration in general. For example, by looking at the definition of concepts regarding immigration and asylum seeking, it becomes clear that an immigrant is a person whose intention is to stay in Finland for longer than a year. Since some asylum seekers will manage to do this, they will, at some point, become conceptually immigrants. (Pakolaisapu, no date of publishing). The constant flux of these concepts in the media meant I had to make judgment calls and use interpretation to make sure the data I analysed was still relevant to my research question. Hence, I was careful to phrase the title of this thesis as an exploration of issues *related* to the asylum seeker crisis *and* the multicultural debate of 2015–2016.

The premise I had in entering this research was the idea that the key events I chose are directly linked to the asylum seeker crisis. I went through these events with some outsiders before starting this research, and had no opposition to this selection. Therefore, I deduce that it seems to have been a common assumption that street patrols, Olli Immonen, A2-ilta, death of Jimi Karttunen and shutting down comment sections are all somehow interlinked with the asylum seeker crisis. There is a limitation to this premise that I deem important to take up at this point. In my efforts to find the connection of each event to the asylum seeker crisis and the multiculturalism debate, I have had to be selective and make efforts to find those connections for each case. In some cases, the connection of the event to the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism was more difficult to find than in others, and the connection of these themes is thus stronger in some events and much less pronounced in others.

What might require further research, in the light of the flux of concepts discussed earlier, are the direct connections of the results of this thesis to the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism specifically. The assumptions I had about certain events being obviously related to the asylum seekers were not as directly related as I expected. For example, the closing of comment sections did not mention asylum seekers in the articles, but instead they mentioned the refugees – two different concepts, but similar connotations. Likewise, in key event 5, the question of street patrolling was mixed together with the question of banning criminal extremist groups. Again, two different concepts, with similar connotations.

This flux of concepts means that at the level of association, the reader as well as the researcher will find themselves in a web of meanings and connotations that seem to have a life of their own. In this thesis, I found that in A2-ilta, for example, the concepts of asylum seekers, immigrants, refugees and even Muslims were all intermixed in the studio discussion. While most of

these conceptual mix-ups were made by the guests of the show, it is the media who is channelling this conceptual flow in their broadcast, reinforcing the interchangeability of these terms.

I suggest, then, that it is the overarching story frame, perhaps what could be called the *zeitgeist* of whatever the media is reporting currently, that makes us as readers to assume these different events and concepts to be linked. When Olli Immonen is talking about multiculturalism as a nightmare, and Soldiers of Odin declare fighting for a white Finland *while* we also read in the media about the arrival of asylum seekers, it is no wonder these issues become intermixed, even causal. The year 2015 showed a spike in the arrival of asylum seekers, as pointed out in the introduction of this thesis, and it is my conclusion that the following events regarding multiculturalism-critique, street patrolling, rise in hate speech and extremist groups are easily interpreted to be connected to this overarching media event.

This showed, for example, in the most shared and read article of the Immonen-case, where the interviewee (train conductor) suggested that it was the Immonen-sensation among other things that sparked up the whole debate on racism and multiculturalism. The following demonstrations, that were said to be caused by Immonen's Facebook-post, mentioned the concepts of marching *against* racism, *for* multiculturalism as well as *in defence* of asylum seekers. This serves to prove that the conceptual clutter related to the topic is very concrete, and I found this discovery to be illuminating as well as challenging for the research.

I also found that the media seems to operate a lot based on perceptions. In the first key event, it was the train conductor's perception of increased racism that prompted him to give a speech; in A2-ilta, it was people's perceptions about reality that were being discussed and mediated; in shutting down comment sections, it was the perception of increased hate speech that gave the media reason to react; and in the emergence of street patrols, it was the perceptions of insecurity and a threat from "the Other" that drove different street patrols out. In the case of Jimi Karttunen's death, things had shifted from perceived atrocities and threats, as phrased by Collins (2012), to an actual death case. Collins warns in his conflict escalation theory that it is the perceptions of atrocities that cause polarization instead of blatant violence. I therefore find it remarkable that the media still seems to relish in basing stories on perceptions and emotions rather than depicting a more balanced reality.

As the concepts kept shifting, so appeared the polarization spectrum to be shifting, too. I expected to find two polar opposites of opinion concerning opinions about asylum seekers, but during the writing process, I had to change this assumption, even on the level of the headline of this thesis as well as in the phrasing of the research question and sub-questions. What started as a quest and a research question on opinions concerning the asylum seekers changed first into a research

question formulated as “What is the role of Finnish journalism in ideological polarization regarding the asylum seeker crisis, the resulting multiculturalism debate and issues related to these topics?”, and finally changed into the research question of “What is the role of Finnish journalism in polarization regarding issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and the resulting multiculturalism debate?”. In other words, what I discovered instead of two clear opposites regarding one specific opinion, I found plurality of polarization regarding many different, fractured issues. As this thesis has shown, there appears to be no one clear polarization spectrum depicted in the Finnish media with fixed poles. In some cases, the spectrum consists of attitudes towards street patrols, and in other cases, it ranges from opinions about Immonen’s ideology to shapeshifting into a spectrum of opinions about the Finns party or multiculturalism in general. Thus, this thesis has depicted some angles of a larger discussion about polarization, and shed light into the fact that polarization does not appear to be a singular entity, but rather a fractured field of different opinion spectrums, some of which overlap with each other. Polarization, in this case, is not directly to be found in opinions about asylum seekers or multiculturalism, but rather in all kinds of side effects and conceptual connotations related to these matters.

Lastly, what I deem of primary importance instead of focusing on each event separately is the overarching holistic frame that emerges from the whole of this thesis: that the repetition of certain frames in Yle is clear, and that some of these frames do contain polarizing ingredients, as explained extensively above. My conclusion is, therefore, that this thesis has showed the contributions of Yle’s media coverage regarding polarization.

#### *A synthesis of this thesis’ findings and previous research*

In relation to previous research in the matter, I feel this thesis has added a small corner piece to an overall massive puzzle that is the field of media’s role in polarization. This research is in harmony with the previous literature and reinforces the notion that media indeed does have a role in polarization. In the literature review, I presented Eide and Nikunen’s points about how political debate concerning migration is polarized in such Nordic countries as Denmark, and how they noted a shift in the political atmosphere even in Finland due to the “right-wing conservative party”, the Finns party, whose agenda was “hostile to immigrants” (Eide and Nikunen 2011, 4). They also noted that “issues of immigration and Islam are tied together in Finnish public discussions---“ (ibid.). What I call an amalgamation of concepts, as described in the findings, is exactly the phenomenon that Eide and Nikunen have described as issues that are “tied together” in conversations. In addition, I found that the connections

to the Finns party were evident in some of the key events of this thesis. I take these as a concrete evidence that this thesis has touched upon a larger subject of a shift in atmosphere in Finland as well as in the Nordic countries about multiculturalism related issues, and has found concrete evidence to this from the media. I also find it interesting to note that the Finns Party seems to be a repetitive variable in many of these topics – another politically interesting subject which could easily warrant a separate research. I find that based on the similarity of my findings to Eide and Nikunen's observations, the data used for this thesis has been a good sample and an adequately fair representation of the "hostile" and politically charged atmosphere in Finland.

Another link to previous research is noting the excessive use of quotations in Yle's coverage, and how covering all kinds of opinions freely can have impacts to legitimizing a larger spectrum of opinions. This connects with the previous knowledge on the matter: as Mutz (2006) has noted, the media provides legitimacy on certain opinions of the politicians by simply covering them regularly (Mutz 2006, 239). In this research, I found that Yle often lets politicians as well as average citizens speak their mind in the articles, which can have strong impacts if their opinions are representing an extreme.

Finally, I found that the findings of this thesis are in line with Robinson and Mullinix's previous research, which notes that news frames influence the reactions to events by identifying the cause of the event (Robinson and Mullinix 2016, 265). This causality was also noted by Entman in his observations concerning how frames function (Entman 1993, 52). In some cases, such as in shutting down the comment sections, the causality of hate speech, refugees and the media's reaction was indicated. Likewise, in the coverage of demonstrations in key event 1, they were largely reported as being the counter-reaction to Olli Immonen's Facebook post. Even if the causalities proposed in these events are an accurate description of reality, the power of the news media to highlight such causalities and their importance must not be underestimated.

In sum, I find coherent links between previous research and this thesis, and I believe that these findings add a piece of detailed information from the Finnish media's point of view to the existing knowledge on the matters of polarization and the media as well as the current political atmosphere regarding the matters related to the asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate.

## 7. Conclusions

This thesis' overall research aim was to answer what is the role of Finnish journalism in polarization regarding issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and the resulting multiculturalism debate. In addition, this thesis sought to briefly conceptualize the polarization and clash of opinions in Finland related to the 2015–2016 asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism debate; to analyse the Finnish media by using examples from Yle news between 2015–2016 with the theories of media framing and critical discourse analysis; and to connect those findings to the framework of polarization and conflict escalation theories. This chapter will revisit the research objectives, summarize the key findings in relation to previous research and the theoretical framework, offer some critique to the existing research and share some thoughts and conclusions that have emerged in writing this thesis.

I found that this thesis has answered the main research question as well as the sub-research questions, which were: What is the role of Finnish journalism in polarization regarding issues related to the asylum seeker crisis and the resulting multiculturalism debate? And: What is the connection between polarization of opinions and media framing? How have the chosen case examples functioned in polarizing the discussion about issues related to asylum seeker crisis and multiculturalism in Finland?

This thesis started from the premise that the media does have a role in polarization, which was established in the literature review and grounded on previous research. It was my intention to see what kind of roles could the Finnish public broadcasting company, Yle, have in polarization, as a non-partisan, government-funded media. I also sought to understand the different ways public broadcasting can portray polarization and take part in it through their usual news routines.

The relationship of this thesis to the previous research is in its contribution to understand how public broadcasting, a non-partisan media, can affect polarization. This thesis has explained this phenomenon by using current examples from the Finnish media landscape that have been often framed as polarizing, and thus brought forward new, relevant information about the matter from the point of view of Scandinavian current events. The previous interpretations of the polarizing effects of the media have been limited to a mainly Americentric view, and it was therefore a challenge to apply a theoretical framework to such completely different circumstances as the Finnish media events. In addition, the theories of polarization tend to not discuss the effect of the media on polarization directly, unless talking about blatant examples such as propaganda. Therefore, this thesis has presented some of the subtler ways in which the media can display attributes contributing to polarization, adding a new angle to the previous research.

The theoretical framework used for this thesis was based on media framing and critical discourse analysis theories and theories of polarization. The tools from media framing and CDA have

worked well in uncovering the often indirect or indistinct ways the media can use its conventions to put forward a specific frame. The critique I offer to polarization and conflict escalation theories is that role of polarization in conflict escalation seems to be often limited to cases where the polarization is, for example, obviously racial or otherwise visible, or else escalating to violence. There appeared to be very few theoretical frameworks for cases such as in Finland, where the polarization is in a level of conceptualisation in the public discussion, but is in flux when it comes to the visible manifestations of it. I believe the recent rise in the discussion concerning Europe containing opposing opinions regarding the asylum seeker crisis might produce interesting new definitions to polarization and add to the existing information about how it manifests itself in society.

## 8. Limitations and further research

As with any qualitative research, there are limitations to this thesis that I see as an opportunity to further research. Some of these limitations I already anticipated and explained in chapter 4 concerning methodologies. In addition, I discovered some more remarks about the limitations of this research during the writing process. I will present them here as an example of the learning process I undertook in writing this thesis and as observations about how to expand this research later.

Firstly, an obvious limitation in this research is that if not interpreted carefully, it might give a one-sided view of how Yle operates. As this thesis starts with the premise that media has a role in polarization, I have only paid attention to those aspects in the news articles that have contributed to this. This might give a view where Yle is only writing in a style that promotes polarisation, but of course, this is not the case. It was the purpose of this thesis to analyse those ingredients that do cause division, and hence other aspects have been omitted. Another research could take into consideration the possibly balancing positive and non-polarizing choices of journalists and analyse, for example, what is the role of journalism in peace-building or conciliation.

Another limitation concerns the role of individual journalists versus the role of journalism as an entity. I have sometimes used these terms interchangeably in this thesis simply because it has been the most logical choice grammatically and conceptually. In practice, it is not always the individual journalist who wrote the article who also chose the headline, or who is even necessarily responsible for all the content in the article. Therefore, I refer to the writers always as “a journalist” in this thesis instead of individualising the authors of news articles by name. In my

experience as a journalist, it is often the duty editor, the online journalist or even the editor-in-chief who collectively partake in coming up with an interesting headline. Therefore, it would be wrong to draw direct conclusions about the role of individual journalists in this process, but rather place the responsibility on journalism, meaning the journalistic routines and conventions.

A third limitation is to assume that all journalists work with intention. In my experience, they do not always have this luxury. Often the work of a journalist is hectic, and there might be little room for making interpretations. I therefore place one piece of criticism to the media theories I used in this thesis, and that is the assumption that word choices, frames and news routines are always calculated or ideological. This might be the case with the media outside public broadcasting, or in countries such as the United States, but the same presumption is not necessarily valid in Finnish public broadcasting.

The final limitation concerns the collection of data. All data was collected using search words and then “cleaned” manually by reading and sorting. Different search words could have easily resulted in different events, and Yle’s search system may not be as accurate as one would hope for, as they have changed some of their operating systems just before the timeline of this thesis (Sami Mattila, data specialist in Yle, personal correspondence between 2016–2017). Also, another researcher might have chosen very different events, or even different articles within the events, for analysis. As such, this thesis gives a sample of aspects that relate to polarisation, but is not exhaustive in this matter. I also do not claim that I represent the reality any more “correctly” than another thesis that could have chosen different events and discovered less polarising effects of Yle. The reader, then, should interpret the findings of this thesis with careful consideration of the context, and understand that this thesis offers a mere glimpse to the politically, ideologically and conceptually charged atmosphere in Finland between 2015–2016. However, this thesis offers one valuable starting point for further analysis about the role of journalism in polarization in Finland, and I wholeheartedly recommend more studies for expanding research in this topic in the future.

## 9. Appendix

Fig. 1

Olli Immonen’s Facebook status on July 25, 2015. A screenshot.





A Tweet by A2-ilta account.

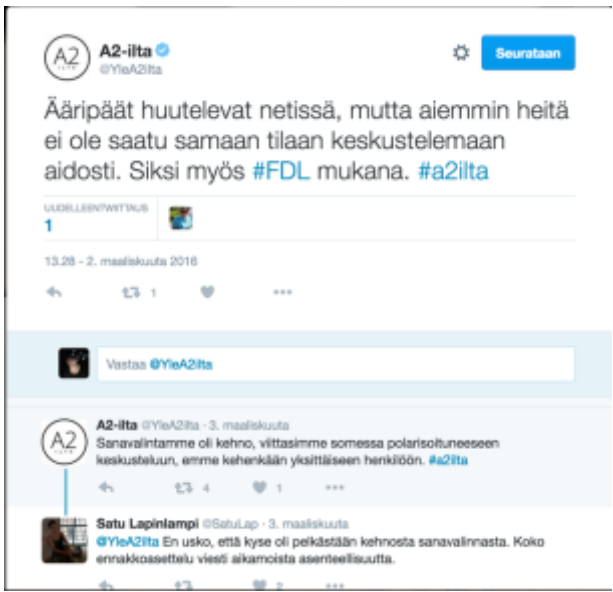


Fig 4.  
A timeline of the key events of this thesis.

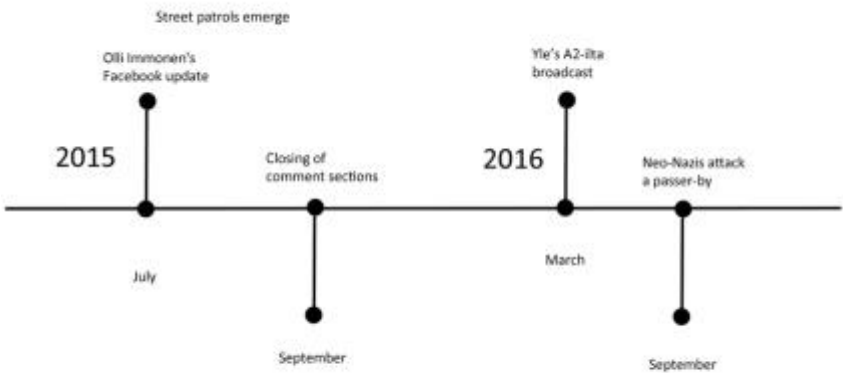


Fig 5.  
Quantitative data and a summary of the results in table form.

Key event 1: Olli Immonen's Facebook update	110 articles	Analysis found polarisation:	
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		1. amongst the Finns Party members	31% of the articles
		2. between the Finns Party and other political parties	17 % of the articles
		3. between Immonen and his ideological supporters and those who are against his ideology, e.g. protesters and other civil actors.	34 % of the articles
			32 % in category "other"
Key event 2: A2-ilta broadcast	8 articles + 1 tv-broadcast	Analysis found 7 sub-frames and evidence of polarising themes	
Key event 3: Closing of comment sections	2 articles	Analysis found that one article represents the reality as conflictual, the other downplays it	
Key event 4: Emergence of street patrols	72 articles	Analysis found polarisation in:	
		1. opinions for street patrols	26.4 % of the articles
		2. opinions against street patrols	61.1 % of the articles
			50 % in category "other"
Key event 5: Neo-Nazis kill a by-stander	60 articles	Analysis found thematic connections to polarization themes from previous key events	

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[PUzZkObcOYROYKs9LiH8lvpTtA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjplJmE9rfSAhUJGCwKHQTdDawQ6AEIKDAC#v=onepage&q=america%20partisan%20media%20landscape&f=false](https://books.google.fi/books?id=TcoRAAAQBAJ&pg=PA8&lpg=PA8&dq=america+partisan+media+landscape&source=bl&ots=jFh1mT8AXC&sig=-PUzZkObcOYROYKs9LiH8lvpTtA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjplJmE9rfSAhUJGCwKHQTdDawQ6AEIKDAC#v=onepage&q=america%20partisan%20media%20landscape&f=false)

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